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BJP man shot dead in Patna

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'Quitting of retail giants like JS might impact trade'

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Shubman Gill slams a 100 after breaking Kohli's record

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

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Rijiju attends Dalai Lama's 90th b'day amid tiff with China over succession

Dalai Lama blesses Union Minister Kiren Rijiju during the prayer ceremony ahead of his 90th birthday at Dharamshala on Saturday **PHOTO: ANI**

DHARAMSHALA, 5 JULY

Union Minister Kiren Rijiju and Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu attended the 14th Dalai Lama's 90th birthday celebrations in Himachal Pradesh's Dharamshala on Saturday. The visit comes just days after the Tibetan spiritual leader revealed his succession plan, triggering a sharp response from China.

According to the Gregorian calendar, the Dalai Lama's birthday falls on 6 July. Rijiju's appearance came a day after Beijing warned India to handle Tibet-related matters "with caution", saying such issues could impact bilateral ties. The Chinese foreign ministry's comments followed Rijiju's assertion that the Dalai Lama's reincarnation should be decided "according to his own wishes".

Earlier this week, China claimed that the next Dalai Lama must be chosen through a Beijing-approved process. Responding, the Dalai Lama stated that his successor would be selected by the India-based Gaden Phodrang Trust, a non-profit he founded — a move widely interpreted as rejecting China's authority over the matter. India's Ministry of External Affairs said it holds no position on religious succession. "The Government of India does not take any position or speak on matters concerning beliefs and practices of faith and religion," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said, reaffirming India's commitment to religious freedom. *—PTI*

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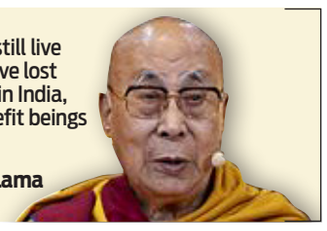
WORDS of WISDOM

I have done my best so far. I hope to still live for 30-40 years more...Though we have lost our country and we are living in exile in India, that's where I have been able to benefit beings quite a lot

—Dalai Lama



Take it or leave: Trump on tariffs as deadline looms

BENGALURU, 5 JULY

US President Donald Trump said he had signed letters to 12 countries outlining the various tariff levels they would face on goods they export to the United States, with the "take it or leave it" offers to be sent out on Monday. The tariffs can be as high as 70 per cent for some countries, starting from 1 August. A basic 10 per cent tariff was levied on most goods coming into the US, though temporarily put on hold until 9 July. India did not fully agree on a trade deal as US wants more access to agricultural and dairy products. India wants to avoid 26 per cent tariffs though a temporary deal. ***—PTI***

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Trinidad & Tobago bats for India's UNSC seat

PORT OF SPAIN, 5 JULY

Trinidad and Tobago reaffirmed its full support to India for a permanent membership of an expanded United Nations Security Council on Saturday. India and Trinidad and Tobago have inked six agreements to boost cooperation in several sectors, including infrastructure and pharmaceuticals, following talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his counterpart from the Caribbean nation, Kamla Persad-Bissessar. Modi landed in Port of Spain on Thursday in the second leg of his five-nation tour. ***—PTI***

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Punjabi actress' dad attacked in clinic

BENGALURU, 5 JULY

Punjabi actor Tania's stepfather, Dr Aniljit Kamboj, was shot by two unidentified men at his clinic in Kot Ise Khan, Moga district, on Friday afternoon. According to reports, the assailants posed as patients and even got Dr Kamboj to examine them before pulling out a gun and firing at least two shots. He was hit in the chest and arm and is currently hospitalised in stable condition. Moga SSP Ajay Gandhi confirmed the attack and said investigations are underway to determine the motive. The incident has shocked the local community. ***—Agencies***

Arm in arm, Thackeray cousins cry war against BJP

Uddhav & Raj are fighting Hindi imposition in Maharashtra

MUMBAI, 5 JULY

Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Saturday said he and MNS head Raj Thackeray have come together to stay united as the cousins shared a political stage for the first time after two decades on the issue of Marathi identity and "imposition" of the Hindi language.

Addressing a joint "victory" rally in Worli following the BJP-led Maharashtra government's rollback of controversial Hindi language resolutions, Uddhav hinted at contesting the upcoming Mumbai civic polls together. "We have come together to stay together. We will capture power in the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation and Maharashtra," he declared, drawing loud cheers.

The reunion comes amid growing calls for unity among Marathi parties after the BJP's rising influence in Maharashtra, particularly through alliances with Eknath Shinde's faction and the NCP. The state government's backtracking on its three-language formula became a rallying point for the Thackeray cousins.

Raj Thackeray, speaking ahead of Uddhav, credited Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis for uniting the cousins — something even Balasaheb Thackeray couldn't manage. He warned the three-language formula was part of a larger BJP plan to separate Mumbai from Maharashtra and divide people on caste lines.

"The BJP's strategy is divide and rule," Raj said, rejecting criticism over his son's convent education. "Even Balasaheb studied in an English school but never compromised on Marathi pride," he added.

Uddhav echoed similar sentiments, warning against any attempt to undermine Marathi and Maharashtra. He criticised the BJP for dividing Marathi people and accused the party of being "traders in politics".

Symbolism was strong at the rally, with only Uddhav and Raj on stage, while next-generation leaders Aaditya and Amit Thackeray stood united, posing for photos and joining their uncles during the national anthem.

Outside the NSCI Dome, thousands of Shiv Sena (UBT) and MNS workers marched with flags and slogans, forcing their way inside to witness the historic reunion — a potential turning point in Maharashtra politics ahead of key civic polls. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

MNS Chief Raj Thackeray and Sena (UBT) Chief Uddhav Thackeray during a joint rally in Mumbai on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

I thank Raj Thackeray for giving me the credit for reuniting the brothers. Somewhere, I must have received the blessings of Balasaheb Thackeray

—Devendra Fadnavis, Maharashtra Chief Minister

INDIA REQUESTS EXTRADITION

Nirav Modi's brother Nihal arrested in US

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

US authorities have arrested fugitive diamantaire Nirav Modi's younger brother, Nehal Modi, following extradition requests from the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), officials said on Saturday.

Nehal Modi, who is the subject of a Red Notice issued by the Interpol, was taken into custody on Friday, US officials told Indian authorities. The next hearing in the matter is scheduled for 17 July, during which he might seek bail in a move expected to be contested by US prosecutors, the officials said.

The proceedings, led by US federal prosecutors, are based on two charges - one count of money laundering under section 3 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and one count of criminal conspiracy under sections 120B (criminal conspiracy) and 201 (disappearance of evidence) of the Indian Penal Code.

Modi is an accused in the alleged Rs 13,000 crore Punjab National Bank (PNB) fraud, one of the biggest banking scams and reportedly orchestrated by him, Nirav Modi and their uncle, Mehul Choksi.

Born and raised in Belgium, Nehal Deepak Modi is wanted in India for allegedly laundering proceeds of crime on behalf of his brother, Nirav Modi, who remains incarcerated in a London prison and is facing extradition proceedings to India.

It is also alleged that Nehal Modi played a pivotal role in concealing and transferring large sums of illicit money through a labyrinthine web of shell companies and offshore transactions, in violation of Indian financial laws. *—PTI*

Nehal Modi **PHOTO: X**

ADR moves SC against EC's revision of Bihar electoral roll

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

The Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR) has moved the Supreme Court challenging the Election Commission's direction for a Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar.

The EC on 24 June issued instructions to carry out an SIR in Bihar, apparently to weed out ineligible names and ensure only eligible citizens are included in the electoral roll, ahead of the Assembly polls in the state.

The NGO wants the order to be set aside as it violates Articles 14, 19, 21, 325, and 326 of the Constitution, as well as provisions of the Representation of People's Act, 1950, and Rule 21A of the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960. Advocate Prashant Bhushan, who filed the plea, said the EC order can arbitrarily and without due process disenfranchise lakhs of voters and disrupt free and fair elections. The last such revision in Bihar was conducted in 2003. According to the EC, the exercise was necessitated by rapid urbanisation, frequent migration, young citizens becoming eligible to vote, non-reporting of deaths, and inclusion of the names of foreign illegal immigrants.

The EC said that it wants to ensure the integrity and preparation of error-free electoral rolls with this exercise. The SIR is being conducted by booth officers through house-to-house surveys. The EC said it will adhere to legal provisions as laid down in Article 326 and Section 16 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, in carrying out the revision. *—PTI*

People from across the state are present here. I advise them not to show any documents other than their voter ID cards. Refuse when asked to do so

—Rabri Devi, ex-Bihar CM

THE DOCUMENT FIASCO

A controversy has erupted in Bihar over the Election Commission's special intensive revision of electoral rolls. As per the EC's directive, around 2.93 crore voters not listed in the 2003 rolls must now submit one of 11 specified documents to prove their eligibility, a move the opposition strongly opposes. The documents are:

1. Any identity card/pension payment order issued to regular employee/ pensioner of Central /state govts/PSU.
2. Any identity card/certificate/ document issued in India.
3. Birth certificate.
4. Passport.
5. Matriculation/educational certificate.
6. Permanent residence certificate.
7. Forest right certificate:
8. OBC/SC/ST or any caste certificate.
9. National Register of Citizens.
10. Family Register.
11. Any land/house allotment certificate

GOLD WINS THE GOLD

Neeraj Chopra clinched the inaugural NC Classic title with a throw of 86.18m in Bengaluru's Sree Kanteerava, fulfilling his dream of hosting and competing at a world-class event before a home crowd and his parents **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD** ***>>>More on Page 8***

Toll on NHs with bridges, tunnels cut by up to 50%

NEW DELHI, 4 JULY

The government has reduced the toll rates up to 50 per cent for the sections of National Highways that have structures like tunnels, bridges, flyovers or elevated stretches, a move which will lower travelling costs for motorists.

User charges at fee plazas on National Highways are usually collected as per the NH Fee Rules, 2008. But, now, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways amended it to introduce a new method or formula for calculating toll charges.

"The rate of fee for use of a section of national highway comprising of structure or structures shall be calculated by adding ten times the length of structure or structures to the length of the section of national highway excluding the length of structure or structures, or five times the total length of section of national highway, whichever is lesser," said the notification. *—PTI*

IN CHIKKAMAGALURU

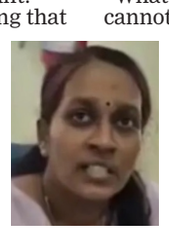
Another bank worker faces flak over Kannada

CHIKKAMAGALURU, 5 JULY

A video of a bank employee in Chikkamagaluru unable to speak Kannada has ignited the language row in the state once again.

In a video being circulated on social media, a Kannada speaking woman is visiting the Canara Bank branch to understand why money was detected from her account.

However, after realising that the woman employee at the bank speaks Malayalam and not Kannada, she starts filming the conversation.



Even as yet another bank employee tries to intervene and de-escalate the situation, the woman can be heard asking, "What is she doing here if she cannot speak Kannada?"

She also adds that the employee's behaviour towards her was rude and insists that she speaks Kannada as she claims she can't speak or understand English.

At one point, when she says, "she wasn't kind to me," the Malayalam speaking employee responds in English, "You weren't either".

The internet seems divided about the conversation in the video. While some defend the woman for her right to be spoken in her native language in Karnataka, others did not get what all the fuss was all about as there was another bank employee who could help the customer in Kannada. *—Agencies*

Saif's Rs 15K cr property goes to retrial

JABALPUR, 5 JULY

In a setback to actor Saif Ali Khan and his family, the Madhya Pradesh High Court has ordered a retrial in the decades-old dispute over ancestral properties worth an estimated Rs 15,000 crore, once owned by the erstwhile rulers of Bhopal.

On 30 June, Justice Sanjay Dwivedi set aside the 2000 verdict by the Bhopal district court that upheld the ownership rights of Saif, his mother Sharmila Tagore, and sisters Soha and Saba. The HC directed the trial court to decide the matter afresh within one year, and if needed, allow new evidence.

The dispute arises from claims by heirs of Nawab Hamidullah Khan, challenging the 1962 succession certificate naming Sajida Begum—Saif's grandmother—as sole successor. The petitioners argue the division should follow Muslim Personal Law and include all heirs of the late Nawab.

The HC ruled the earlier verdict relied on a judgment since overruled by the Supreme Court. The retrial may significantly impact inheritance claims and property rights across generations.

The properties were inherited through Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi, Saif's father, after Bhopal Riyasat merged with India in 1949. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Ramesh Jarkiholi's son booked for firing in the air

BELAGAVI, 5 JULY

Police have filed a case against Santosh Jarkiholi, son of Gokak legislator Ramesh Jarkiholi, for firing a round of bullets in the air during the Lakshmidevi fair in Gokak town on Saturday. Belagavi Superintendent of Police Bhimashankar Guled said that Santosh was found opening the fire in the air with a gun during the sixth day of the Lakshmidevi jatra where more than one lakh of people participated. Since using a weapon in public places is banned, the police registered a case, he added. The Lakshmidevi fair is celebrated once every 12-years in Gokak town. *—Salar News*

Can get PM's nod for Mekedatu in 5 mins: HDK

MYSURU, 5 JULY

Union Minister of Steels and Major Industries HD Kumaraswamy on Saturday challenged Congress to persuade Tamil Nadu to agree to the Mekedatu project and promised to get the Prime Minister's approval in just five minutes. Speaking to press before attending the District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee (DISHA) meeting, he said, "Let Congress convince its ally, seek its approval. The Union government is ready to implement the project if Tamil Nadu agrees for the project". Referring to Congress leaders' statement on him coming back to power in Karnataka, he said, "Let Congress rule the State for another 20 years. Who has objected to their ruling? People will decide in the next elections". *—Salar News*

Ninth Mysuru Literature Festival commences

MYSURU, 5 JULY

The ninth Mysuru Literature Festival commenced on Saturday at Hotel Southern Star, inaugurated by Pramoda Devi Wadiyar of the Mysuru royal family. She emphasised the importance of youth involvement in promoting literary and cultural events while embracing critical thinking. Organised by the Mysuru Literary Forum Charitable Trust and Mysuru Books Club, it featured esteemed guests, including Booker Prize winners Banu Mushtaq and Deepa Basthi. The fest showcased a diverse range of topics, from women's empowerment to environmental conservation, with approximately three dozen speakers including former union minister Manishankar Aiyar. *—Salar News*

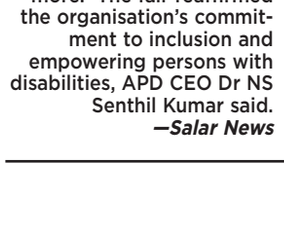


PHOTO: SALAR NEWS

NGO APD hosts job fair for people with disabilities

BENGALURU, 5 JULY

The Association of People with Disability (APD) hosted the 'Mega Job Fair' at its Lingarajapuram campus in City, connecting over 500 jobseekers with disabilities to 28 inclusive employers. Inaugurated by Anitha Lakshmi, KAS, COO, Karnataka State Rural Livelihood Mission, alongside Padma Shri & Arjuna Awardee and renowned para-athlete Dr Malathi Holla, and Kannada actor Amar, the event focused on promoting dignity through employment. Lakshmi highlighted the need for meaningful opportunities. Employers such as Amazon, Infosys and Jio offered roles in IT, retail, logistics and more. The fair reaffirmed the organisation's commitment to inclusion and empowering persons with disabilities, APD CEO Dr NS Senthil Kumar said. *—Salar News*

No link between vaccine and heart attacks: Report

State panel says Covid vaccine protects against cardiac illness

BENGALURU, 5 JULY

The State government's expert committee concluded that there was no association between premature cardiovascular diseases and the Covid-19 vaccine. It called for nationwide cardiac surveillance, autopsy-based registries, and mandatory heart screening for children from the age of 15.

The committee was formed to investigate the surge in heart related illness in Hassan district. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah reported that at least 20 people died of cardiovascular illness and said there was a possible linkage between the deaths and vaccine, which he claimed was implemented in a hurry.

"The observational study conducted at Jayadeva Hospital, did not find any association between premature cardiovascular disease and a prior history of Covid 19 infection or Covid Vaccination," the report said.

The report attributed the surge in heartattacks in Hassan to other factors, like pre-existing conditions, smoking and drinking *PHOTO: ANI*

"Most studies/ reports published in rest of world also have not found any causal association between Covid vaccination and sudden cardiovascular events. On the contrary, Covid vaccination has been shown to be protective against cardiac events in the long term."

The report, headed by Dr KS Ravindranath, Director of Sri Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences and Research, studied 251 patients below the age of 45 at Jayadeva Hospital who were admitted to the institute with heart issues between 1 April to 31 May.

The report said that there was long term affect of Covid on the heart.

"While in the immediate post covid phase, there is an increase in the incidence of sudden cardiovascular events due to a pro-inflammatory state, the same cannot be held to be true in the long term (more than 1 year)", it said. "Current data does not support the belief that 'long Covid' is responsible for the rise in sudden cardiovascular events among the young.

The report instead attributed the surge in heart attacks to other risk factors, including smoking and drinking, and pre-existing health issues.

The panel also suggested a "routine heart screening at school level – 10th standard, or 15 years of age". *—Salar News*

FAILURE OF DUTY

Khandre suspends 2 officials for the death of 5 tigers

BENGALURU, 5 JULY

Karnataka Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre has suspended two officials for negligence and dereliction of duty in connection with the 'unnatural death' of five tigers in the Male Mahadeshwara(MM) Hills.

The suspension of deputy conservator of forests, Y Chakrapani along with departmental inquiries were also recommended. A female tigress and her four cubs were found dead in the Hugyam range of the MM Hills 26 June.

Authorities arrested three individuals, including the cow's owner, who allegedly poisoned the cow's carcass, suspected of causing the tigers' deaths.

Khandre's decision came after reviewing the preliminary report submitted by a high-level inquiry committee probing the incident.

Assistant conservator of forests, Gajanana Hegde and range forest officer, Madesh were suspended for failing to monitor the patrol staff effectively.

The three officers were sent on compulsory leave until further notice.

For the past three months, frontline contract staff were allegedly not paid their wages, hampering patrolling activities. Although funds to pay wages were released in April, payments were delayed until June.

The deaths were caused by chemicals allegedly sprayed on a carcass, in "an act of revenge" after a tiger killed livestock. *—PTI*

We don't negotiate trade under deadlines: Goyal

BENGALURU, 5 JULY

With the Congress mocking the BJP-led NDA government over the proposed trade deal with the US, Union Minister Piyush Goyal on Saturday said India negotiates from a position of strength and not under deadlines.

He also accused the Congress of "negotiating and signing agreements that were not in the national interest" during the UPA regime.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had earlier attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the Indo-US trade deal, claiming the PM will "meekly bow" to the tariff deadline set by the Trump administration.

The party has been attacking the PM for remaining silent and not countering US President Donald Trump's repeated claims of bringing a halt to hostilities between India and Pakistan after the Pahalgam terror attack.

Goyal had earlier stated that India would accept the proposed trade deal with the US only when it is fully finalised and in national interest. Trump has set a deadline of July 9 to finalise the trade agreement with India.

Meanwhile, addressing the IIT Madras Alumni Association's Sangam 2025 on Saturday, Goyal expressed confidence that new technologies will define India's growth story in the coming years.

He said India is transforming from a country known for seeking jobs to becoming a nation of job creators. *—PTI*

'MOST IMPORTANT LINE'

BJP demands launch of Yellow Line

BENGALURU, 5 JULY

The BJP's Bengaluru South unit on Saturday organised a Citizens' march from Lalbagh North Gate to Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) headquarters, Shanthinagar, demanding the early commencement of the metro's Yellow Line.

MP Tejasvi Surya, who participated in the march, highlighted the importance of public transport in the City. He said that despite it being the most important line in the City, the inauguration of the Yellow Line had been delayed for years.

"The most critical Yellow Line that connects the residential heart of South Bengaluru to Electronic City is pending the inauguration and opening of operations for almost four years.

BJP leaders and supporters marched from Lalbagh to the BMRCL headquarters in Shanthinagar, Saturday *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

In 2021, the operations were scheduled to start. Four years later, we still don't have any clarity," Surya said.

He further stated that the metro fares had increased by 100 per cent, which resulted in a dip of 1 lakh daily commuters and demanded the fare fixation report to be made public.

"We want the fare fixation report to be made public," he further stated. *—ANI*

All of Tumakuru is important to me, not just Kunigal: DKS

BENGALURU, 5 JULY

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said that a scheme would be formulated to provide water to all taluks of Tumakuru, as he asserted that the whole district was important to him not just Kunigal.

Speaking to press at his Sadashivanagar residence, he said, "We have taken feedback from representatives of the district on Hemavathi link canal."

He added that Union Minister Somanna had recommended an expert inspection by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), which the government had accepted.

"It is not just about Kunigal, but we have to provide water to the entire Tumakuru district. We have a plan for it and we will distribute water in such a way that it is fair to all," he said. *—Salar News*

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge at a tree plantation drive in Kalaburagi on Saturday. He said that if the public planted just two trees in front of every house, it would make a difference *PHOTO: SALAR NEWS*

Kharge urges State, Central govts to act for environment

KALABURAGI, 5 JULY

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday stressed the need to increase forest cover in State and across the country, expressing dismay over the "ineffective implementation of existing laws and programmes" to curb deforestation and expand green cover.

The AICC chief was speaking at the Vanamahotsava (tree plantation festival) event here, part of the 'Hariru Kalyana Karnataka' initiative, under which the State's forest department aims to plant and nurture over 25 lakh saplings in the region.

"If you can't grow trees, you have no right to cut them," Kharge said.

Citing a forest report, he pointed out that the country's forest cover averages 25.17 per cent of its geographical area, which he said is insufficient and should be at least 33 per cent. He noted that State's forest cover stands at just 21 per cent.

"Even if two trees are planted in front of every house, it will make a difference," he said, highlighting that nearly 20 lakh hectares of tree cover have been lost in the country.

Karnataka Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre, Kalaburagi district in-charge Minister Priyank Kharge, and other leaders attended the event.

Kharge urged the State government to prioritise large-scale afforestation efforts. *—PTI*

State launches 'Skill Bridge' to Germany

FRANKFURT, 5 JULY

The State government has unveiled the Skills Bridge Network, a strategic initiative designed to facilitate skilled youth from the state in securing employment in Germany. This long-term partnership, known as the Bengaluru–Germany Skills Bridge, connects the Government Tool and Training Centre (GTTC) with German vocational institutions and employers.

Dr. Sharanaprakash Patil, State's Minister for Medical Education, Skill Development, Entrepreneurship and Livelihood, emphasised the initiative's role in offering a dignified migration pathway. "We want our youth to enter German workplaces with confidence, fully prepared and supported by their government," he stated during the launch in Frankfurt.

Germany's increasing demand for skilled workers in sectors such as healthcare, transport, mechatronics, and advanced manufacturing was highlighted. Karnataka produces vast numbers of qualified youth every year, and framing proper opportunities is now crucial.

The government's aim is to secure placements for 500 youth in German companies annually by 2026 and scale this to 1,000 by 2030. To achieve this, skill hubs incorporating German language labs and international curricula are being established, alongside a digital tracking system for student mentoring throughout their journey. *—Salar News*

Why no action when CM speaks disrespectfully: Ashoka

BENGALURU, 5 JULY

Opposition Leader R Ashoka questioned why no action was taken against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, who has repeatedly spoken disrespectfully against officials when a case was registered against BJP MLC N Ravikumar for making allegedly derogatory remarks.

"Siddaramaiah has spoken disrespectfully against an IAS officer, a District Commissioner, and a police officer, yet no action was taken," Ashoka alleged.

He criticised the CM for addressing everyone, including the President, in the singular. Ashoka claimed that an FIR is filed if BJP members make mistakes, but nothing happens against Congress members. *—Salar News*

Hebbalkar is shielding the corrupt: Activist

BIDAR, 5 JULY

Social activist Omprakash Rotte accused Lakshmi Hebbalkar, Minister of Women and Child Development of shielding Tippanna Sirsigi and Ravindra Ratnakar

Speaking at a press conference in the Bidar, Rotte the President of the Vishwakranti Divya Peetha, noted the alleged irregularities in recruitment, and distribution of substandard food grains by the Department of Women and Child Development.

The department had launched a formal investigation, and based on the report, it recommended disciplinary action against them. However, Hebbalkar was protecting the two officials instead of acting on the recommendations, Rotte charged.

Even a year after the report, no action has been taken. Instead, Ratnakar has been appointed as Public Relations Officer, Rotte alleged.

"By protecting the corrupt, what kind of message is she trying to convey to officials in Bidar district?" he questioned. Rotte demanded the suspension of the officers and that Hebbalkar be removed from the State cabinet. *—Salar News*

ANOTHER SCANDAL?

50 sex tapes seized from party leader in Dakshina Kannada

MANGALURU, 5 JULY

- Cops were investigating Samitraj Dharagudde, Mangaluru district co-organiser of Hindu Jagarana Vedike, in connection with a stone pelting incident against vehicles, when they discovered the cache of videos

State police found more than 50 videos of people in compromising positions, including politicians in a Hindu leader's phone in Mangaluru and filed an FIR against him on Saturday.

Cops were investigating Samitraj Dharagudde, Mangaluru district co-organiser of Hindu Jagarana Vedike, in connection with a stone pelting incident on vehicles in the city recently. The accused is also allegedly a personal assistant of a politician from Dakshina Kannada or Udupi, who has not been named so far.

During the inquiry into stone pelting, cops went through his phone when they found several obscene videos involving politicians in compromising positions.

Inspector Sandesh said one of the videos was of a legislator from costal districts.

An FIR has been filed based on it by the Moodabidare police, who are trying to ascertain how he came to be in possession of the videos and whether he is involved in further crimes like coercion or blackmailing. The police said they are probing the case from all angles. *— Salar News*

Samitraj Dharagudde *PHOTO: FB*

One killed, another injured in bomb explosion in WB

KOLKATA, 5 JULY

A crude bomb explosion in Rajoa village, Purba Bardhaman district, resulted in one fatality and left another person injured. The incident occurred around 8.30pm, causing panic among locals. Authorities reported that the powerful blast destroyed the tin roof of a house suspected to be used for bomb-making activities. Residents recounted hearing successive explosions that shook the area, rattling doors and windows of nearby homes. Police discovered a charred body inside the abandoned house, while the injured individual, identified as Tufan Chowdhury, was taken to a local hospital for treatment. Preliminary investigations indicate the involvement of local anti-social elements recruiting miscreants to manufacture bombs onsite. —*PTI*

India, Trinidad & Tobago ink six pacts

They also discuss collaboration on defence, agriculture, healthcare and UPI

PORT OF SPAIN/BUENOS AIRES/NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

India and Trinidad and Tobago have inked six agreements to shore up their cooperation in several sectors including infrastructure and pharmaceuticals following talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his counterpart Kamla Persad-Bissessar.

The two leaders also explored on Friday potential collaboration in areas of defence, agriculture, healthcare and digital transformation, unified payments interface (UPI), capacity building and people-to-people exchanges.

"The landmark visit of the PM to Trinidad and Tobago has given a boost to the special ties between the countries," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi holds bilateral discussions and delegation-level talks with Trinidad & Tobago Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar, in Port of Spain PHOTO: PTI

This is the first bilateral visit by an Indian prime minister to this Caribbean island nation since 1999.

On his part, Modi expressed appreciation for Trinidad and Tobago's strong support and solidarity to the people of India in the wake of Pahalgam terror attack.

He also met Trinidad and Tobago President Christine Carla Kangaloo.

Meanwhile, Modi has arrived in Buenos Aires on a two-day visit during which he will hold talks with the country's top leadership to review ongoing cooperation and discuss ways to enhance bilateral partnership in key areas.

Modi, who reached here on Friday evening (local time), was accorded a ceremonial welcome upon his arrival at the Ezeiza International Airport.

This is the first Indian bilateral visit at the prime ministerial level to Argentina in 57 years.

In a separate but related incident, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Saturday recalled India's deep connection with that country and then PM Indira Gandhi's visit to Buenos Aires in 1968.

Ramesh also recalled that Raul Prebisch, an Argentine economist who was very influential in the 1950s and 1960s, helped establish the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

He said that Global South, a term now used by Modi and EAM S Jaishankar, was propagated by UNCTAD, although it was first used by British banker Oliver Franks way back in 1960. —*PTI*

> Piyush Goyal can beat his chest all he wants, mark my words, Modi will meekly bow to the Trump tariff deadline
>
> -Rahul Gandhi, Congress leader

PHOTO: PTI

Lalu re-elected national president of RJD at 78

PATNA, 5 JULY

Lalu Prasad was re-elected national president of the RJD, a party he founded by splitting the Janata Dal, on Saturday. Addressing the national council of the party following the re-election on its 28th anniversary, the 78-year-old leader said a survey is being done to identify suitable candidates for the upcoming assembly elections in Bihar. "A survey is underway to pick up the candidates from among you people. I will take a final decision in consultation with Tejashwi," he said. The veteran leader seemed visibly pleased with his 36-year-old son and said, He also profusely thanked his wife Rabri Devi, who had taken the political plunge when a CBI charge sheet in the fodder scam had forced him to step down as chief minister of Bihar. —*PTI*

Ladli Behna Yojana aid to increase after Diwali: MP CM

SINGRAULI, 5 JULY

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav announced that beneficiaries of the Ladli Behna Yojana will receive an increased monthly aid of Rs 1,500 starting after Diwali, up from the present Rs 1,250. Addressing a women's empowerment event, Yadav confirmed that the government has allocated Rs 27,147 crore for women's welfare, including Rs 18,699 crore dedicated to this scheme. The financial boost to Rs 1,500 will include an extra Rs 250 on Raksha Bandhan. Launched on 10 June, 2023, the scheme has reportedly contributed to BJP's electoral success in the November 2023 assembly polls. Yadav also revealed that over 51 lakh girls have benefited from Laxmi Yojana with total assistance of Rs 672 crore. Additionally, more than 9,000 tribal families have received land rights.—*PTI*

Protests erupt in Kerala over health min's resignation

THIRU'PURAM, 5 JULY

Widespread protests have erupted across Kerala, with various opposition groups demanding the resignation of Health Minister Veena George following a tragic incident at Kottayam Medical College, where a portion of the building collapsed, resulting in the death of a woman and injuries to others. Activists from Congress and BJP mobilised in cities including Kochi and Kollam, confronting police and using water cannons in efforts to disperse the crowds. Protests intensified with Youth Congress members marching to George's official residence. Senior Congress leader Ramesh Chennithala expressed that the chief minister should have sought George's resignation, accusing government of negligence. —*PTI*

Delhi court declares Sanjay Bhandari fugitive economic offender

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

A Delhi special court on Saturday declared UK-based arms consultant Sanjay Bhandari a fugitive economic offender under the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act (FEOA) of 2018, following a petition by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). The ruling allows the ED to confiscate Bhandari's Indian assets worth around Rs 21 crore.

Bhandari, 63, fled to London in 2016 shortly after the Income Tax department conducted raids on his premises in Delhi. ED initiated a money laundering investigation against him in 2017, based on a charge sheet filed under the anti-black money law of 2015. The agency filed its first

charge sheet in 2020 and a supplementary one in 2023.

ED said, Bhandari acquired and renovated a property at 12, Bryanston Square in London in 2009, allegedly using funds provided by Robert Vadra, the businessman husband of Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. The agency claims the renovations were carried out under Vadra's instructions. —*PTI*

National Herald: 'AICC sought to revive AJL'

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Senior advocate RS Cheema, representing Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, argued in a Delhi court on Saturday that All India Congress Committee (AICC) had no intention of selling the assets of Associated Journals Limited (AJL), but was instead attempting to revive an institution linked to India's freedom movement. Cheema, addressing Special Judge Vishal Gogne, criticised the ED rate for selectively presenting facts and quoted Mark Twain and Urdu poet Wasim Barelvi to highlight alleged distortions in agency's case.

ED accused Sonia and Rahul, along with others, of money laundering and conspiracy in alleged fraudulent takeover of AJL properties, valued over Rs 2,000 crore, through not-for-profit company Young Indian.

Cheema insisted AJL had never been profit-driven and denied that Rahul or Sonia Gandhi exercised control over AICC decisions. —*PTI*

MARATHI LANGUAGE ROW

5 MNS workers attack Kedia's office, held

MUMBAI, 5 JULY

Five Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) activists were arrested on Saturday for vandalising the Worli office of investment analyst Sushil Kedia. The incident followed a viral video in which Kedia said he was unable to speak Marathi fluently, despite living in Mumbai for over 30 years, and challenged the MNS to act against him.

In response, MNS workers hurled coconuts at the glass door of a WeWork office near Century Bazar, shouting slogans in praise of the Marathi language and party chief Raj Thackeray. Security personnel struggled to contain the chaos as tensions escalated.

Amid political unrest in Maharashtra, the controversy follows a recent incident where MNS activists allegedly slapped a sweet shop owner in Mira Bhayandar for not speaking Marathi.

Following the vandalism,

Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) and Shiv Sena (UBT) supporters gather before a joint victory rally PHOTO: PTI

Kedia released a four-minute video apologising to Raj Thackeray. He claimed his original tweet was made under stress and had been misinterpreted. Kedia said he refrains from using Marathi formally due to fear of saying something out of context and facing backlash. "Dum ghoot jaata hai aise mahol me," he said, expressing how suffocating such an environment feels.

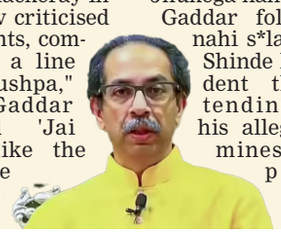
Calling his remarks an emotional overreaction, Kedia expressed admiration for Thackeray and requested forgiveness. "When our own people choke us, mistakes are bound to happen," he said.

The incident underscores growing linguistic tensions in Maharashtra, raising concerns over the balance between cultural pride and freedom of expression in a diverse, multilingual city like Mumbai. —*Agencies*

UDDHAV FLAYS SHINDE OVER 'JAI GUJARAT' SLOGAN

MUMBAI, 5 JULY

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray has taken aim at Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, who raised slogan "Jai Gujarat" during a rally, prompting significant backlash. At a joint rally with Raj Thackeray in Mumbai, Uddhav criticised Shinde's comments, comparing them to a line from film "Pushpa," stating, "Gaddar (Shinde) said 'Jai Gujarat' just like the actor in the movie Pushpa says 'Jhukega nahi s*la'; but this Gaddar follows 'Uthega nahi s*la'." He claimed Shinde lacks independent thought, contending that his allegiance undermines Marathi pride. —*Agencies*



BJP leaders target Thackeray cousins over joint rally

MUMBAI, 5 JULY

BJP leaders in Maharashtra have lambasted Uddhav and Raj Thackeray, branding their joint rally in Mumbai a "desperate attempt" to recover their political standing ahead of forthcoming civic polls.

Uddhav, leader of Shiv Sena (UBT), hinted at a united front with cousin Raj, president of Mahar ashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), for the civic elections. In contrast, BJP representatives condemned the event, with state minister Ashish Shelar characterising it as a "family reunion" born of fear over BJP's electoral strength. MLC Pravin Darekar added that the rally's true nature was political, claiming it was a cover for Uddhav's acknowledgment of his diminished power.

He asserted that the Marathi electorate had already rallied behind the BJP-led Mahayuti alliance for the upcoming assembly elections. —*PTI*

SC issues notices to Centre on VC appointment rows

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Supreme Court has issued notices to the Centre, the Tamil Nadu Governor's office, and the University Grants Commission on a plea by Tamil Nadu government challenging a Madras High Court order.

The High Court had stayed a state law granting the government the authority to appoint Vice-Chancellors in state universities, a move previously cleared through deemed assent by the Supreme Court in an earlier case between the state and the Governor.

A bench comprising Justices

- These regulations mandate that Vice-Chancellors must be appointed by the Chancellor, typically the Governor.

PS Narasimha and R Mahadevan sought responses following the May 21 interim stay granted by a vacation bench of the High Court. The stay came in response to a public interest litigation filed by a lawyer, who argued that the state's amendments violated UGC regulations. These regulations mandate that Vice-Chancellors must be appointed by the Chancellor, typically the Governor.

The case raises significant questions over legislative competence, federalism, and the interplay between central regulations and state laws in the governance of higher education institutions. —*PTI*

No opposition on extraditing people of concern: Bhutto

ISLAMABAD, 5 JULY

Pakistan's former foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said his country had no objection to extraditing "individuals of concern" to India as a confidence-building measure, as long as Delhi showed willingness to cooperate in process. Bilawal, chairman of Pakistan People's Party, said in an interview with Al Jazeera on Friday while responding to a question on extraditing Lashkar-e-Taiba Chief Hafiz Saeed & Jaish-e-Muhammad Chief Masood Azhar as possible concessions and good-faith to India, Dawn said. —*PTI*

Palaniswami calls for unity to defeat DMK

CHENNAI, 5 JULY

AIADMK General Secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami on Saturday reiterated his call for the unity of all like-minded parties to defeat ruling DMK government in Tamil Nadu.

Addressing the media after launching his election campaign logo "Makkalai Kaappom, Thamizhagathai Meetpom" (Let's Protect the People, Let's Redeem Tamil Nadu), Palaniswami said, "All like-minded parties should unite to defeat the DMK, which is anti-people and whoever wants DMK to get defeated, we are happy to form an alliance with them. Their

cooperation is needed for this -- that is my opinion."

He said AIADMK was open to forming an alliance with anyone who opposed the DMK, including actor Vijay's newly launched party, Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam, despite latter ruling out any tie-up with BJP. AIADMK, a key partner in BJP-led NDA, stood firm on its alliance plan. —*ANI*

10 days on, JeM terrorists remain elusive in J&K

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

More than 10 days after an encounter in the Bihali forest of Basantgarh, Udhampur, three Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) militants remain elusive, despite relentless combing operations by security forces.

On 26 June, one JeM terrorist was killed, but his three-armed associates managed to escape using the dense, hilly terrain — intersected with rivers and streams — commonly used to slip into Chenab Valley.The encounter followed intelligence inputs about the movement of four terrorists carrying arms, ammunition, and explosives in the area. A major search operation continues, but so far, the militants have evaded capture.

Just days later, on 2 July,

another encounter broke out in Chatroo area of Kishtwar district. Once again, the militants managed to escape.

This mirror the lead-up to the 26 April Pahalgam attack, which claimed 26 lives. Prior to that attack, multiple infiltration attempts and encounters were reported: on 1 April in Shopian, on 6 April in Pulwama — where one militant was killed — and on 9 April in Jopher-Marta belt of Ramnagar, Udhampur. In several of these incidents, militants slipped away or were not found. —*Agencies*

NEW CURRICULUM

Kerala to teach Guv's duties in Class 10

T'PURAM, 5 JULY

A curriculum committee, set up by the Kerala General Education Department, has approved a new chapter in the Class 10 textbook in state-run schools that explains the constitutional powers and duties of state Governors.

The meeting of the panel, headed by General Education Minister V Sivankutty, approved the new contents in textbooks of Class second, fourth, sixth, eighth and tenth, an official statement said here.

The new chapter on the Governor's powers was included in the Class 10 textbook amidst an ongoing tussle between the Kerala government and Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar in the

General Education Minister V Sivankutty PHOTO:PTI

name of the display of Bharat Mata portrait.

The powers and duties of the Governor are discussed in detail in the chapter titled "Democracy: An Indian Experience" in the second volume of social science textbook of Class 10, according to the statement issued on Friday.

The particular chapter also explains the crisis in Indian democracy, the Supreme Court's ruling that abolished the electoral bonds, and resort politics, the statement further said. The revised textbooks would reach the children before the Onam holidays.

- The particular chapter also explains the crisis in Indian democracy, the Supreme Court's ruling that abolished the electoral bonds, and resort politics, the statement further said.

During the meeting, curriculum committee also gave permission for holding detailed discussions in classrooms in connection with the revision of textbooks, it added. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

T'gana plant explosion toll rises to 40

BHUBANESWAS, 5 JULY

The death toll of workers in the explosion at the chemical factory in Telangana rose to 40, with nine from Odisha. One more person was identified using DNA-based analysis. The latest victim has been identified as Purna Chandra Sahu, a native of Sukarpada in Cuttack district, said Pritish Panda, Officer on Special Duty (OSD), Directorate of Odisha Parivaar. The bodies of all deceased persons have been handed over to their family members. On Friday, Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi announced an ex gratia of Rs 10 lakh each for the families of Odia workers who lost their lives in the explosion. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

5 buses collide in J&K, 36 Amarnath pilgrims injured

RAMBAN/JAMMU, 5 JULY

36 Amarnath pilgrims suffered minor injuries when five buses slammed into each other in Ramban district on Saturday. The buses were part of a convoy headed for Pahalgam base camp in south Kashmir from Jammu's Bhagwati Nagar. The accident took place near Chanderkoot, along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway. The collision occurred due to brake failure in one of the buses. The pilgrims were rushed to a hospital. They were discharged after being administered with treatment. The convoy left for its destination after the damaged buses were replaced. *—PTI*

Militant arrested in Manipur, arms recovered

IMPHAL, 5 JULY

Security forces arrested a member of a proscribed outfit from Manipur's Imphal West district, police said on Saturday. The cadre of the banned United National Liberation Front (Pambei) was apprehended from the Moirangkhom area in the district on Friday, they said. The security personnel also recovered arms and ammunition during separate operations in Churachandpur and Imphal East districts, a police officer said. Rifles, live cartridges, pistols and hand grenades were among the items recovered on Friday, he said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

2 held for trafficking to US via 'dunki' route

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested two key men allegedly involved in trafficking humans to the US via the infamous 'dunki' route. The accused, Sunny Donker from Himachal Pradesh and Shubham Sandhal from Punjab, were arrested on 4 July. Both are associates of Gagandeep Singh alias Goldy, who was arrested in March based on a complaint from a victim trafficked to the US. He used to take around Rs 45 lakh from each traveller and would promise to send them to the US on a valid legal visa and send them on an arduous journey via multiple countries. He sent more than 100 people illegally to the US before his arrest. *—PTI*

I hope to live for 30-40 years more: Dalai Lama

Thousands offer prayers for his long life amid succession row

DHARAMSHALA, 5 JULY

The Dalai Lama on Saturday put to rest rumours surrounding the announcement of his successor, saying he hopes to live for another 30-40 years more to serve people.

"Looking at the many prophecies, I feel I have blessings of the Avalokiteshvara..... I hope to still live for 30-40 years more...," the Tibetan spiritual leader said.

Since his childhood, he had the feeling that he had a strong connection with Avalokiteshvara.

The Tibetan government-in-exile organised a weeklong series of events to celebrate the 14th Dalai Lama's 90th birth anniversary

A long life prayer ceremony was held at the main temple at McLeodganj, attended by over 15,000 devotees, representatives of different sects of Tibetan Buddhism and senior lamas of various monasteries

Dalai Lama dismissed claims on announcement of his successor *PHOTO:PTI*

Though the Tibetans have lost their country and are living in exile in India, he has been able to "benefit beings quite a lot," he said.

He noted that Buddhist scriptures talk about people having different mental dispositions and inclinations, but despite that, everyone strives for happiness.

The rumours of an announcement of the Dalai Lama's successor were making rounds, but were refuted in light of increased tension with China on the matter.

Penpa Tsering, the president of the Central Tibetan Administration, rejected such rumours by saying, "It doesn't happen like that."

".... He says he's going to live for another 20 years.....His holiness might appoint somebody, or he might say that I'm going to be born...," Tsering said.

The birth anniversary celebrations will be attended by cabinet ministers Kiren Rijiju and Rajiv Ranjan Singh, Arunachal Pradesh CM Pema Khandu, Sikkim CM Prem Singh Tamang and Hollywood actor Richard Gere. *—PTI*

Roads blocked and red alert on as rains lash Himachal

SHIMLA/ RANCHI, 5 JULY

Severe monsoon rains have caused widespread disruption across northern and eastern India, with Himachal Pradesh worst affected. Over 260 roads, including 176 in Mandi district, are blocked due to incessant rain. A red alert has been issued for Kangra, Sirmaur and Mandi on Sunday, while other districts remain under orange alerts.

Since the monsoon began on 20 June, 72 deaths have been reported in Himachal, with 45 linked to rain-related incidents such as landslides and flash floods. Mandi alone reported 14 fatalities from 10 incidents this week. Losses are estimated at Rs 700 crore, with 300 transformers and 281 water supply schemes impacted.

In Jharkhand, an orange alert has been sounded for Gumla, Simdega, Khunti and West Singhbhum due to expected very heavy rainfall on Sunday, driven by a cyclonic circulation. The state has recorded a 75 per cent rainfall surplus since June, with Ranchi logging a 177 per cent excess.

A traffic police personnel regulates vehicular movement on a road amid rains in Shimla in Himachal Pradesh on Saturday *PHOTO: PTI*

Rajasthan too witnessed heavy showers, with Indargarh (Bundi) recording 144 mm in 24 hours. Rain is forecast to continue in Kota, Jaipur, Ajmer and Udaipur divisions for the next few days.

The Met Office has warned of landslides, flash floods, and infrastructure damage, urging people to avoid vulnerable areas and water bodies. *—PTI*

UP man gets life sentence for killing Dalit man

GONDA, 5 JULY

A court has sentenced a 30-year-old man to rigorous life imprisonment for the 2020 murder of a Dalit youth.

Special Judge Surya Prakash Singh convicted Nandan, sentencing him to life imprisonment and imposing Rs 16,000 fine. Failure to pay will result in an additional nine months' imprisonment.

The incident occurred on 14 August, 2020 in Ballipur village in Mankapur in Uttar Pradesh's Gonda district.

Rahul, 20, was fatally stabbed after confronting Sumitra Nandan and two others for repeatedly harassing his sister. His mother, Mainavati, filed a complaint against Nandan, Rakesh Chauhan, and Abdul Qadir.

The accused had threatened Rahul before the attack. All three were charge sheeted,

Chauhan and Qadir were acquitted due to lack of evidence. *—PTI*

7 YRS AFTER SON'S MURDER

BJP man shot dead in Patna

Police personnel during an investigation after businessman Gopal Khemka was allegedly shot dead while returning home, in Patna *PHOTO: PTI*

PATNA, 5 JULY

Prominent Bihar-based businessman and BJP leader Gopal Khemka was shot dead outside his residence in Patna by a bike-borne assailant, seven years after miscreants had gunned down his son in Hajipur.

Khemka was gunned down around 11.40pm on 3 July near the gate of his house in Gandhi Maidan locality as he was about to alight from his car.

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Saturday reviewed the law and order situation and instructed officials concerned to complete the investigation into his killing.

The police had secured the crime scene.

Kumar said the rule of law was top priority for the NDA government, and warned of strict action against police personnel in case of negligence.

Meanwhile, family members of Khemka alleged that police personnel arrived at the spot nearly two hours after the incident.

Bihar DGP Vinay Kumar, however, denied the charge.

An SIT, comprising officials of the Special Task Force and sleuths of the central district police, has been constituted to supervise the ongoing investigation .

Police obtained some crucial leads in the case and are probing the possibility of an old enmity.

After his son was killed in Hajipur in 2018, security was provided to Gopal Khemka till April 2024. Security is now being provided to his other son, a doctor *—PTI*

SUV slams into wall in UP, 8 dead

SAMBHAL, 5 JULY

Eight people, including a groom and two children, died after an SUV crashed into a wall in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal district on Saturday, police said. The group was travelling from Har Govindpur village to Sirtoul in Budaun for a wedding when the accident occurred near Janata Inter College in the Junawai area.

The vehicle, reportedly speeding, lost control and collided with a wall. Police teams rushed to the spot and began rescue efforts. Five people were declared dead at Junawai Community Health Centre. The deceased include groom Suraj ,24; his sister-in-law Asha, 26; her daughter Aishwarya, 3; Sachin, 22; Ganesh, 1; Komal, 18; Madhu, 20; and driver Ravi, 28.

Two others, Deva, 24 and Himanshi, 2, were taken to hospital in Aligarh. Deva remains in serious condition.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath offered condolences and directed officials to ensure proper treatment for the injured. *—PTI*

Union Home Amit Shah speaks after he laid the foundation stone of Tribhuvan Sahkari University in Anand in Gujarat on Saturday *PHOTO: PTI*

Gujarat gets India's 1st cooperative university

GUJARAT, 5 JULY

Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah laid the foundation stone for the Rs 500 crore Tribhuvan Sahkari University in Anand, Gujarat, stating it would help eliminate nepotism and bring transparency in human resource recruitment within the cooperative sector.

"...With this university, those who graduate from here will be eligible for jobs in the cooperative sector..,"Shah said.

Graduates will be equipped with technological knowledge, accounting skills, a scientific outlook, and marketing expertise, while also embodying the core values of the cooperative movement to support the poor, tribal communities, Dalits, and women. Shah stressed on its introduction as a subject in school *—Agencies*

With 136% rise, Puducherry leads in TB testing

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Puducherry has emerged as a frontrunner in Tuberculosis (TB) testing, ramping up examinations of presumptive TB patients from 2,233 per lakh population in 2015 to 2,526 per lakh in 2024.

The UT further increased its presumptive TB testing rate to 5,268 per lakh population in the first quarter of 2025, marking a 136 per cent increase compared to 2015, said Dr S Govindarajan, Mission Director, National Health Mission (NHM), Puducherry.

On World TB Day this year, Union Health Minister JP Nadda recognised Puducherry's efforts with an appreciation certificate.

Puducherry recorded a marked decline in incidence of TB in the past five years. *—PTI*

4 dead, more trapped after portion of J'khand coal mine collapses

People stand near the site at Karma area, where one person was killed and others were feared trapped after a portion of a coal mine collapsed during alleged illegal mining in Jharkhand's Ramgarh district *PHOTO: PTI*

RAMGARH, 5 JULY

Four were killed and a few others are feared trapped after a portion of an abandoned coal mine collapsed during "illegal" mining in Jharkhand's Ramgarh district. A rescue operation to find others is underway.

The incident occurred in the early hours at the Karma area of Kuju Outpost in the district but the villagers took away three bodies before the police team arrived at the spot, another official said.

The incident occurred in an abandoned mine of Central Coalfields Ltd.A section of villagers have been demonstrating near the CCL Karma Project office in the area to protest against the incident, officials said.

Jharkhand BJP chief and Leader of Opposition Babulal Marandi has demanded a high-level probe into the incident. The CCL had closed the mine, but the coal mafia reopened it as illegal mining remained unchecked, *—PTI*

3 INDIANS ABDUCTED EARLIER

Son in Mali untracable, mom seeks help

BERHAMPUR, 5 JULY

A woman in Odisha's Ganjam district has moved police stating that she is unable to contact her son, who is working at a cement factory Mali.

P Narasama, a resident of Samarajhol village, said she was worried about her son P Venkatraman, 28, working in a cement factory in Kayes after getting the news about the abduction of three Indians working at a similar factory in Mali.

"I am very much worried about the fate of my son. I requested the government for his safe release," said Narasama, a widow.

She informed the police at Hinjili on 4 July.

"We are closely coordinating with the Ministry of External Affairs and Indian Embassy about the incident and waiting for their response," Vishal Gagan, Principal Resident Commissioner, Odisha said.

The al-Qaeda-linked JNIM extremist group claimed responsibility for the coordinated attack on several Malian army positions *PHOTO: REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE*

On receiving a social media clip about the alleged abduction of a youth from Odisha, the Resident Commissioner in Delhi moved the Indian Embassy in Mali for needful action at their end.

Narasama last spoke to her son on 30 June. Since then, his phone was switched off. Her son's company informed her on 3 July that he was under police custody.

India expressed serious concern over the abduction of three of its nationals in Mali amid a wave of there.

The Ministry of External Affairs, in a statement on 2 July said: "The incident occurred on 1 July when a group of armed assailants carried out a coordinated attack at the factory premises and forcibly took three Indian nationals as hostages.

The Indian government condemned the incident, *—PTI*

IRCTC offers Ramayan Yatra covering 30 sites for Rs 1.17 L

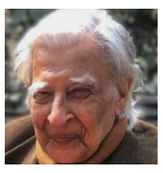
NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Capitalising on the popularity of Ayodhya's Ram temple, the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) is launching its 5th Shri Ramayana Yatra from 25 July, 2025. The 17-day journey, beginning at Delhi Safdarjung station, will cover over 30 sites linked to Lord Ram, including Ayodhya, Nandigram, Sitamarhi, Janakpur (Nepal), Buxar, Varanasi, Prayagraj, Chitrakoot, Nashik, Hampi, and Rameshwaram, before returning to Delhi.

Operated via the fully air-conditioned Bharat Gaurav Deluxe AC Tourist Train, the tour offers 1st, 2nd, and 3rd AC classes with modern amenities such as restaurants, a kitchen, shower cubicles, sensor-based toilets, foot massagers, CCTV, and onboard security.

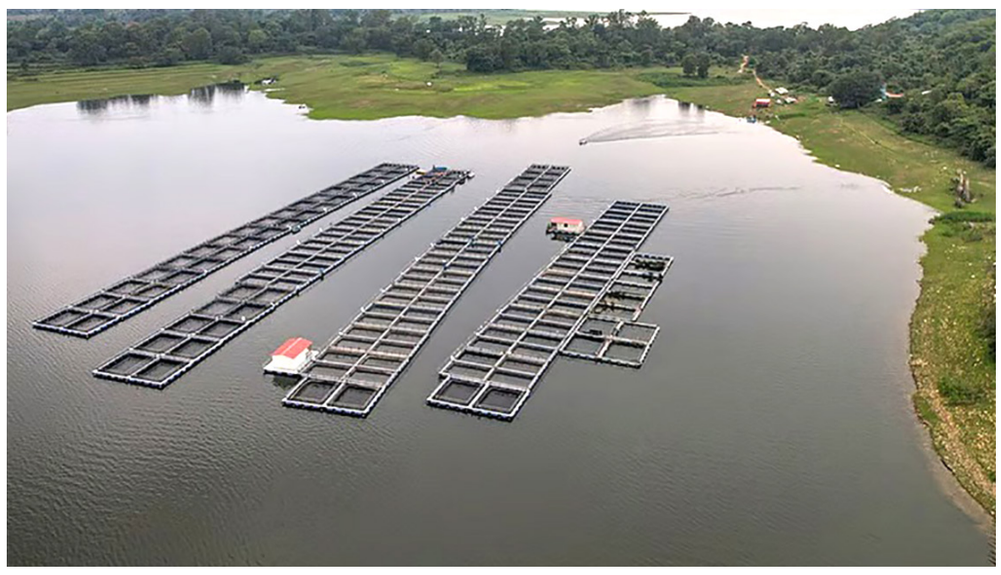
Prices range from Rs 1,17,975 (3 AC) to Rs 1,79,515 (1 AC coupe), inclusive of travel, hotel accommodation, vegetarian meals, transfers, insurance, and tour managers. *—PTI*

100 YEARS & STILL CREATING



Krishen Khanna, the last surviving modernist and a towering figure in Indian art, turns 100 today — still painting and capturing the soul of a changing nation. He spent eight of his 10 decades at the canvas, chronicling India's highs and lows. His works include 'Truckwallas', capturing the lives of truck drivers; 'News of Gandhiji's Death', depicting the aftermath of Mahatma Gandhi's killing; and 'Exodus', reflecting Partition's trauma ***PHOTO: ICCR***

Abandoned mines fuel fish farming boom in J'khand



Fish farming now operates in 16 abandoned coal mine pits spanning Ramgarh, Ranchi, and Chatra ***PHOTO: PTI***

In the coal-mining heartland of Jharkhand, abandoned water-filled pits left behind by mining companies are being transformed into profitable fish farms, providing livelihoods for displaced communities and addressing protein shortages in rural areas.

Around 1,741 such abandoned coal pits exist across Jharkhand, with many dating back to the 1980s. While coal mining companies are legally mandated to undertake scientific closure of these pits, implementation has been poor due to expensive costs involved.

The Kuju Fishermen Cooperative Society, operating from the 22-acre Ara coal pit in Ramgarh district, has emerged as a success story in this transformation.

Shashikant Mahto, now Secretary of Kuju Fishermen Cooperative Society, began the initiative in 2010 without proper infrastructure.

"I began fish farming in the water-filled abandoned Ara coal pit without any cage. I had randomly put fish seed and harvested a good crop," Mahto said.

His first catch, a 15-kg Katla fish, won him the first prize at a government 'mela' and Rs 5,000 in prize money, along with four fishing cages.

The venture has scaled dramatically since then. By 2012, Mahto had installed four cages of 6x4x5 metres each and harvested 6-7 tonnes of fish.

Recognising the potential, Mahto and other residents formed the Kuju Fishermen Cooperative Society. The collective approach enabled them to access central and state government schemes, including the National Mission for Protein Supplements and funding from the District Mineral Foundation Trust (DMFT).

Today, 68 society members operate 126 cages across the 22-acre Ara coal pit, which falls under Central Coalfields Ltd (CCL) in Ramgarh district.

The entire Rs 4-crore cage infrastructure was funded through 100 per cent government subsidy.

Last year, the society produced 40 tonnes, primarily Pangasius and Monosex Tilapia from the Ara mine pit, which was sold in local markets and neighbouring Bihar.

The society also operates in another 16-acre pit, abandoned since 1988, where they harvested 10 tonnes last year.

However, regulatory challenges remain. "We gave our land for the mining project. We cannot start fish farming in abandoned coal mine pits without a proper NOC (No objection certificate) from the coal company," Mahto said. The district collector issued necessary clearances with state government support.

Shambhu Prasad Yadav, State Deputy Director in Fisheries Department and Managing Director of Jharkhand State Fish Cooperative Federation highlighted the untapped potential. "Many abandoned coal pits of CCL are there in the district which hold water throughout the year and can be exploited for cage fish culture," he said.

Current average yield from these coal pits stands at around 200 kg per hectare annually. Yadav believes cage fish culture could boost production to 10,000 kg per hectare.

The success has inspired expansion across Jharkhand. Fish farming now operates in 16 abandoned coal mine pits spanning Ramgarh, Ranchi, Bokaro, and Chatra.

Out of 16, three pits each are located in Ranchi, Ramgarh, Hazaribagh, and two in Bokaro and one in Chatra district.

Yadav said cage fish farming is also promoted in abandoned stone pits. Currently, fish farming is undertaken in 10 stone pits in Dumka, Pakur, Palamu and Sahibganj districts.

The cultivated species, Pangasius and Monosex Tilapia, are well-adapted to the water conditions in these pits, making them ideal for this form of aquaculture.

On safety and quality of fish grown in coal pits, Yadav said the average depth of an abandoned pit is about 150-200 feet and farmers use boat to reach the cage for feeding and harvesting.

"The state government had long back tested the water and fish quality to ascertain impact of toxic substances. The findings were positive. The only difference is that the colour of fish harvested from coal pits is darker than the one grown in reservoirs," he noted.

The initiative addresses multiple challenges facing Jharkhand. Ramgarh district is landlocked, with rural populations dependent on agriculture. Most land falls under forest or mining categories, limiting livelihood options and affecting protein availability for the poor.

"There are 1,741-odd coal pits in the state," Yadav said, pointing to massive expansion possibilities.

While Jharkhand has formal policies and compensation mechanisms for mining-displaced families, many face inadequate rehabilitation and limited employment opportunities. The fish farming model offers a pathway to sustainable livelihoods while making productive use of abandoned mining infrastructure.

By law, coal mining companies must fill or scientifically reclaim abandoned pits as part of comprehensive closure plans. However, compliance particularly for pre-2009 mines, has often been poor, leaving many pits unfilled and unreclaimed. *—PTI*

SALAR

Isolation drives Antarcticians to madness in midwinter

As Midwinter Day arrives in Antarctica – the longest and darkest day of the year – winter-over crews mark a century-old tradition, celebrating survival through the sunless months and looking forward to the return of light. But behind the festivities lies a complex and often troubling history of psychological strain, isolation, and unsettling behaviour that has long haunted the frozen continent.

Even with modern comforts like hot running water and heated shelters, overwintering in Antarctica remains mentally and physically gruelling. This March, the winter season began with troubling news from South Africa's SANAE IV research station, where a crew member allegedly threatened and assaulted colleagues. With only nine people on site, remote psychological intervention was required to restore order.

For historians and polar experts, this was a stark reminder of a long pattern: Antarctica, with its desolation and extreme isolation, can bring out the darkest aspects of human behaviour.

Haunting origins in literature

Long before Europeans first sighted Antarctica, the icy southern realms were imagined as places of torment. In 1797, English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge's The Rime of the Ancient Mariner described a ship trapped in Antarctic ice, where killing an albatross brings eternal damnation. Edgar Allan Poe's 1838 tale 'Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket' veered into horror, involving mutiny, cannibalism, and ghostly visions near the South Pole.

Later, HP Lovecraft's 'At the Mountains of Madness' (1936) was inspired by real polar expeditions, describing an Antarctic mission descending into madness and horror. And John Carpenter's 1982 film 'The Thing', set in a fictional Antarctic research station, explores paranoia and isolation as an alien creature hunts and impersonates the crew. This cult film is screened annually at the US South Pole Station after the final plane leaves before winter.

Real stories of madness and violence

Fiction mirrors fact. In 1959, a chess game at Russia's Vostok Station reportedly ended in a stabbing. In 2018, a similar incident occurred at Russia's Bellingshausen Station when Sergey Savitsky stabbed Oleg Beloguzov, reportedly over repeated spoilers to books Savitsky was reading. Criminal charges were later dropped. In 2017, a worker on South Africa's Marion Island smashed a colleague's room with an axe during a romantic dispute.

Early explorers knew the risks

The so-called "Heroic Age" of Antarctic exploration (1897–1922) saw leaders recognise the toll such isolation could take. American physician Frederick Cook, who wintered with the 1898–1899 'Belgica' expedition, described fears of "unknowable cold and its soul-depressing effects." In Julian Sancton's 2021 account of the expedition, the ship was dubbed the 'Madhouse at the End of the Earth'.

Cook wrote of his crew's symptoms: lethargy, heart weakness, despair, and a "spirit of abject hopelessness." Australian physicist Louis Bernacchi, who joined the 1898–1900 'Southern Cross' expedition, noted the eerie psychological impact of endless Antarctic night, writing that the landscape loomed "as impalpable as the frontiers of a demon world."

The 1911–1914 Australasian Antarctic Expedition, led by Douglas Mawson, endured deadly accidents, including the death of two men and Mawson's own month-long solo trek through crevassed terrain. More quietly tragic was the story of Sidney Jeffryes, a wireless operator who arrived in 1913 and later suffered a breakdown. Jeffryes sent frantic radio messages claiming others were plotting to kill him and that he was the only sane man at Cape Denison.

Mawson later wrote that the psychological strain of radio work under brutal weather was too much for Jeffryes. After returning to Australia, Jeffryes was found wandering the bush and institutionalised. For decades, his role was erased from Antarctic history – an uncomfortable blemish on the heroic image of early explorers.

Cultural and systemic challenges

Not all Antarctic challenges stem from cold and isolation. In 2022, both the U.S. Antarctic Program and the Australian Antarctic Division released reports revealing that sexual harassment and assault were common at remote bases.

Experts linked these problems not to the environment but to ingrained cultures of toxic masculinity and poor accountability.

As humanity prepares for future missions to similarly hostile environments, such as space, Antarctica serves as a cautionary model. It is a place of scientific discovery and international cooperation – but also a place where, cut off from the wider world, human behaviour can shift unpredictably.

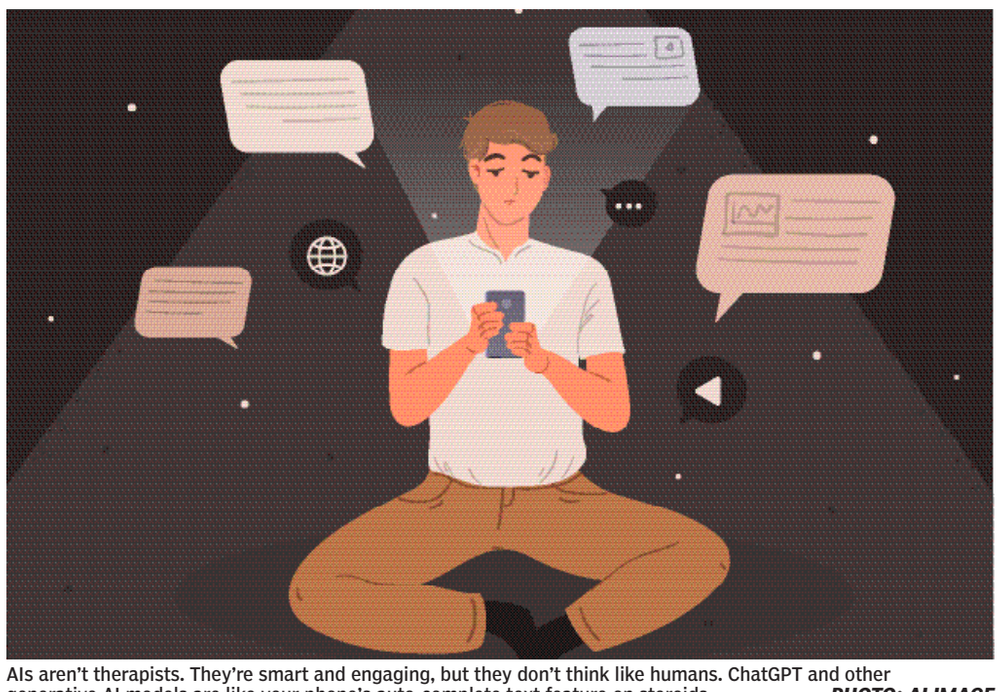
Midwinter Day is both a celebration of endurance and a reminder that in Antarctica, the greatest threat often lies not outside in the ice – but within the human mind *—PTI*

After five months of isolation in trying conditions on a remote Antarctic island, 22 men rejoice at their rescue in August 1916 ***PHOTO: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS***

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Do you talk to AI when you're feeling down? Think before you vent



AIs aren't therapists. They're smart and engaging, but they don't think like humans. ChatGPT and other generative AI models are like your phone's auto-complete text feature on steroids ***PHOTO: AI IMAGE***

As more and more people spend time chatting with artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots such as ChatGPT, the topic of mental health has naturally emerged. Some people have positive experiences that make AI seem like a low-cost therapist.

But AIs aren't therapists. They're smart and engaging, but they don't think like humans. ChatGPT and other generative AI models are like your phone's auto-complete text feature on steroids. They have learned to converse by reading text scraped from the internet.

When someone asks a question (called a prompt) such as "how can I stay calm during a stressful work meeting?" the AI forms a response by randomly choosing words that are as close as possible to the data it saw during training. This happens so fast, with responses that are so relevant, it can feel like talking to a person.

But these models aren't people. And they definitely are not trained mental health professionals who work under professional guidelines, adhere to a code of ethics, or hold professional registration.

Where does it learn to talk about this stuff?

When you prompt an AI **system such as ChatGPT, it draws information from three main sources to respond:**

1. Background knowledge it memorised during training.
2. External information sources.
3. Information you previously provided.

1. Background knowledge

To develop an AI language model, the developers teach the model by having it read vast quantities of data in a process called "training".

Where does this information come from? Broadly speaking, anything that can be publicly scraped from the internet. This can include everything from academic papers, eBooks, reports, free news articles, through to blogs, YouTube transcripts, or comments from discussion forums such as Reddit.

Are these sources reliable places to find mental health advice? Sometimes. Are they always in your best interest and filtered through a scientific evidence based approach? Not always. The information is also captured at a single point in time when the AI is built, so may be out-of-date.

A lot of detail also needs to be discarded to squish it into the AI's "memory". This is part of why AI models are prone to hallucination and getting details wrong.

2. External information sources

The AI developers might connect the chatbot itself with external tools, or knowledge sources, such as Google for searches or a curated database.

When you ask Microsoft's Bing Copilot a question and you see numbered references in the answer, this indicates the AI has relied on an external search to get updated information in addition to what is stored in its memory.

Meanwhile, some dedicated mental health chatbots are able to access therapy guides and materials to help direct conversations along helpful lines.

3. Information previously provided

AI platforms also have access to information you have previously supplied in conversations, or when signing up to the platform.

When you register for the companion AI platform Replika, for example, it learns your name, pronouns, age, preferred companion appearance and gender, IP address and location, the kind of device you are using, and more (as well as your credit card details).

On many chatbot platforms, anything you've ever said to an AI companion might be stored away for future reference. All of these details can be dredged up and referenced when an AI responds.

And we know these AI systems are like friends who affirm what you say (a problem known as sycophancy) and steer conversation back to interests you have already discussed. This is unlike a professional therapist who can draw from training and experience to help challenge or redirect your thinking where needed.

What about specific apps for mental health?

Most people would be familiar with the big models such as OpenAI's ChatGPT, Google's Gemini, or Microsofts' Copilot. These are general purpose models. They are not limited to specific topics or trained to answer any specific questions.

But developers can make specialised AIs that are trained to discuss specific topics, like mental health, such as Woebot and Wysa.

Some studies show these mental health specific chatbots might be able to reduce users' anxiety and depression symptoms. Or that they can improve therapy techniques such as journalling, by providing guidance. There is also some evidence that AI-therapy and professional therapy deliver some equivalent mental health outcomes in the short term.

Bottom line

At this stage, it's hard to say whether AI chatbots are reliable and safe enough to use as a stand-alone therapy option.

More research is needed to identify if certain types of users are more at risk of the harms that AI chatbots might bring.

It's also unclear if we need to be worried about emotional dependence, unhealthy attachment, worsening loneliness, or intensive use.

AI chatbots may be a useful place to start when you're having a bad day and just need a chat.

But when the bad days continue to happen, it's time to talk to a professional as well. *—PTI*

Lanka arrests over 300 in crackdown on gun violence

COLOMBO, 5 JULY

In a significant crackdown aimed at curbing gun violence and dismantling criminal networks, Sri Lankan authorities arrested over 300 individuals during a coordinated overnight operation in the northern suburbs of Colombo, officials said on Saturday. "The joint operation, conducted on the night of 4 July, involved personnel from the Sri Lanka Police, Special Task Force, Army, and Navy," the Ministry of Public Security said. Over 300 people were arrested for their alleged involvement in drug-related and other crimes, it said. "These operations are aimed at eliminating the underworld and drug-related crimes," the release said. Opposition groups claim that since January, more than 40 people were killed in over 60 shooting incidents. *—PTI*

Indian-origin man sentenced for raping child in UK

LONDON, 5 JULY

A 24-year-old Indian-origin man has been sentenced to life imprisonment after being convicted of multiple charges of sexual offences against minors in London. Navroop Singh was sentenced at Isleworth Crown Court to a minimum of 14 years, following a thorough police investigation involving forensic evidence, CCTV footage, and witness testimonies. He pleaded guilty to three charges, including the rape of a girl under 13, and faced a separate conviction for the attempted rape of a woman. Acting Chief Superintendent Sean Lynch praised the bravery of the victims and the diligent work by the police. The investigation was prompted by reports of an attempted rape incident, during which Singh threatened a victim with an imitation firearm. *—PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

'Fantastic Four' actor McMahon dies aged 56

LOS ANGELES, 5 JULY

Australian actor Julian McMahon, famed for his portrayal of Dr. Doom in the 'Fantastic Four' films, has passed away at the age of 56 after a courageous battle with cancer. His wife, Kelly McMahon, announced his death, sharing heartfelt sentiments about his love for life, family, and fans. Born on 27 July 1968 in Sydney, McMahon initially modelled before transitioning to acting, earning recognition through his roles in various television series and films, including 'Nip/Tuck' and 'Premonition'. He reprised his iconic role in 'Fantastic Four' and its sequel alongside notable co-stars. With a career spanning decades, he was known for his charm and charisma. *—PTI*

Japan anxious over artist's earthquake prediction

TOKYO, 5 JULY

A manga artist's 1999 prediction about a mega-earthquake in Japan has gripped the nation with fear. Dubbed the "Japanese Baba Vanga", Ryo Tatsuki has previously predicted several natural calamities, including the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami and the 1995 Kobe earthquake. In her the 'The Future I Saw', she had mentioned that a crack would open under the sea between Japan and the Philippines, and that would cause huge waves, which would be three times bigger than the deadly tsunami that struck Japan in 2011. A small island in southern Japan has recently recorded over 1,000 tremors in a week recently. With many cancelling their travel plans, Tatsuki said she is "not a prophet" and urged the public to "act appropriately based on expert opinions." *—Agencies*

Trump signs his 'Big Beautiful Bill' on Independence Day

On 4 July, he says that 'America is winning'

WASHINGTON, 4 JULY

President Donald Trump signed his package of tax breaks and spending cuts into law Friday after his cajoling produced almost unanimous Republican support in Congress for the domestic priority that could cement his second-term legacy.

Flanked by Republican legislators and members of his Cabinet, Trump signed the multitrillion-dollar legislation outside the White House, and then banged down the gavel that House Speaker Mike Johnson gifted him that was used during the Bill's final passage Thursday.

The legislation extends Trump's 2017 multitrillion-dollar tax cuts and cuts Medicaid and food stamps by USD 1.2 trillion. It provides for a massive increase in immigration enforcement. Congress' nonpartisan scorekeeper projects that nearly 12 million more people will lose health insurance under the law.

Against odds that at times seemed improbable, Trump achieved his goal of celebrating a historic — and divisive — legislative victory in time for the nation's birthday.

Fighter jets and a stealth bomber streaked through the sky over the annual White House Fourth of July picnic as Trump and first lady Melania Trump stepped out onto the White House balcony.

"America's winning, winning, winning like never before," Trump said, noting last month's bombing campaign against Iran's nuclear program, which he said the flyover was meant to honour. "Promises made, promises kept and we've kept them."

Democrats assailed the package as a giveaway to the rich that will rob millions more lower-income people of their health insurance, food assistance and financial stability.

"I never thought that I'd be on the House floor saying that this is a crime scene," Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York said during a record-breaking speech that delayed the Bill's passage by eight-plus hours. "It's a crime scene, going after the health, and the safety, and the well-being of the American people."

The package is certain to be a flashpoint in next year's midterm elections, and Democrats are making ambitious plans for rallies, voter registration drives, attack ads, bus tours and even a multiday vigil, all intended to highlight the most controversial elements. *—PTI*

US President Donald Trump salutes B-2 Bomber jets with First Lady Melania Trump from the White House *PHOTO: X @WHITEHOUSE*

Don signed letters to 12 countries on tariffs

US President Donald Trump said he had signed letters to 12 countries outlining the various tariff levels they would face on goods exported to the United States, with the "take it or leave it" offers to be sent out on Monday. Trump, speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One as he travelled to New Jersey, declined to name the countries involved, saying that would be made public on 7 July. "The letters are better... much easier to send a letter," he said on Friday. Trump also said on Friday that the imposed tariffs can even be higher than the earlier set percentage. He said that the tariff can go as high as 70 per cent.

Pak, US conclude critical round of trade talks

Pakistan and the US have concluded a critical round of trade negotiations, reaching an understanding on a deal that could shape the future of the country's key export sectors, a media report said on Saturday. A formal announcement is expected only after the US concludes similar ongoing negotiations with other trade partners, Dawn News reported. The agreement, when signed, could lead to increased Pakistani imports of US goods — notably crude oil — and potential American investment in Pakistan's mining, energy, and infrastructure sectors. Projects like the Reko Diq copper and gold mine and related energy infrastructure were a focus of the talks.

A makeshift tent camp at dusk in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip for Palestinians displaced by Israels offensive *PHOTO: PTI*

Hamas responds positively to Gaza ceasefire deal

DEIR AL-BALAH, 4 JULY

- Hamas said it is "fully prepared to immediately enter into a round of negotiations regarding the mechanism for implementing (ceasefire) framework."

Hamas said Friday it has given a "positive" response to the latest proposal for a ceasefire in Gaza but said further talks were needed on implementation.

The Hamas statement came as Israeli airstrikes killed 15 Palestinians in Gaza early Friday, while a hospital said another 20 people died in shootings while seeking aid, while the IDF says it now holds operational control over 65 per cent of the Gaza Strip.

In its statement late Friday, Hamas said it "has submitted its positive response" to Egyptian and Qatari mediators.

It said it is "fully prepared to immediately enter into a round of negotiations regarding the mechanism for implementing this framework." It did not elaborate on what needed to be worked out in implementation.

An official close to the talks said Hamas had several issues it was requesting — that Israeli troops in Gaza pull back to positions it held on 2 March before it broke the previous ceasefire; that aid flow into Gaza in sufficient quantities through the UN and other international humanitarian agencies; and that negotiations continue beyond 60 days if needed to reach a deal for a permanent end to the war and the release of all remaining hostages.

US President Donald Trump meanwhile, reiterated his belief that a Gaza ceasefire could be inked next week, as he is set to host Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. *—PTI/ANI*

Ukraine destroys Russian airbase as conflict escalates

KYIV, 5 JULY

Ukraine said it struck a Russian airbase on Saturday, while Russia continued to pound Ukraine with hundreds of drones overnight as part of a stepped-up bombing campaign that has further dashed hopes for ending the war.

Ukraine's military General Staff said Saturday that they struck the Borisoglebsk airbase in Russia's Voronezh region, describing it as the "home base" of Russia's Su-34, Su-35S and Su-30SM fighter jets. Russian officials did not immediately comment on the attack.

This comes in the backdrop of Russia stepping up its long-range attacks on Ukraine, significantly after a phone conversation between US President Donald Trump and his Russian counterpart.

After the call, he told reporters aboard an Air Force One, "It's a very tough situation. I told you I was very unhappy with my call with President Putin. He wants to go all the way, just keep killing people".

Trump also had a conversation with his Ukrainian counterpart that ended on a seemingly positive note on how Ukrainian air defences might be strengthened, possible joint weapons production between the US and Kyiv, and broader US-led efforts to end the war with Russia, according to a statement by the President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

In the recent round of attacks, waves of drones and missiles targeted Kyiv overnight into Friday in the largest aerial assault since Russia's invasion of Ukraine began, killing one person and wounding at least 26 others. *—PTI*

Ukrainian Emergency Service personnel work to extinguish a fire following a Russian attack in Kharkiv region, Ukraine *PHOTO: PTI*

'China needs Russia to win Ukraine war'

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has told EU leaders that Beijing does not want to see Russia losing its war with Ukraine because the US would then shift its whole focus towards China, a candid admission that surprised officials in Brussels, a media report said. Wang's comment during his talks with EU's Kaja Kallas would confirm what many in Brussels believe to be Beijing's position, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported on Friday.

3 mayors arrested in Turkey amid crackdown on oppn

ISTANBUL, 5 JULY

The mayors of three major cities in southern Turkey were arrested Saturday, state-run media reported, joining a growing list of opposition figures detained since the mayor of Istanbul was imprisoned in March.

Abdurrahman Tutdere, the mayor of Adiyaman, and Zeydan Karalar, who heads Adana municipality, were detained in early morning raids, according to Anadolu Agency. Both are members of the main opposition Republican People's Party, or CHP.

The CHP mayor of Antalya, Muhittin Bocek, was arrested with two other suspects in a separate bribery investigation by the Antalya Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, Anadolu reported.

Karalar was arrested in Istanbul and Tutdere was arrested in the capital, Ankara, where he has a home.

Ten people, including Karalar and Tutdere, were arrested as part of an investigation by the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office into allegations involving organised crime, bribery and bid-rigging.

The CHP mayor of Manavgat, a Mediterranean resort city in Antalya province, and 34 others were reportedly detained over alleged corruption.

This follows the arrests of scores of officials from areas controlled by the CHP. *—PTI*

A problem if Iran restarts nuke programme: Trump

This satellite image provided by Maxar Technologies shows the Isfahan enrichment facility in Iran after being hit by Israeli airstrikes *PHOTO: PTI*

WASHINGTON, 5 JULY

United States President Donald Trump has said Iran has not agreed to inspections of its nuclear programme or to giving up enriching uranium, adding that they could restart it at a different location.

Tehran's nuclear programme had been "set back permanently", he said aboard the Air Force One on Friday.

"I would think they'd have to start at a different location. And if they did start, it would be a problem," Trump said.

Trump added that he would not allow Tehran to resume its nuclear programme, claiming that Iranian officials wanted to meet with him. *—Agencies*

Synagogue door set ablaze, Israeli hotel attacked in Aus

CANBERRA, 5 JULY

A man set the door of a synagogue ablaze, and a group of protesters stormed an Israeli restaurant in Melbourne on Friday night, the latest in a wave of "anti-Semitic" attacks in Australian cities, CNN reported on Saturday. The incidents occurred seven months after criminals destroyed a synagogue in Melbourne.

About 20 people were inside the synagogue in the downtown area of East Melbourne when a man poured flammable liquid on the front door of the synagogue on Albert Street before setting it on fire, Victoria state police said, as per CNN.

The group was having Shabbat dinner, marking the beginning of the Jewish day of rest, when the attack occurred at 8pm local time, Alex Ryvchin, the co-CEO of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ), wrote on X.

No one was injured, and firefighters extinguished the small blaze, police said, adding that the perpetrator, who remains unidentified, fled the scene. *—ANI*

UNFORESEEN STORM

At least 24 dead, 23 missing in Texan floods

KERRVILLE, 5 JULY

At least 24 people were killed and a frantic search continued overnight for many others missing in the Texas Hill Country, including more than 20 from a girls camp, after a storm unleashed nearly a foot of rain and sent floodwaters spilling out of the Guadalupe River.

The destructive force of the fast-rising waters just before dawn Friday washed out homes and swept away vehicles. There were hundreds of rescues around Kerr County, including at least 167 by helicopter, authorities said. The total number of missing was not known but the sheriff said between 23 and 25 of them were girls who had been attending Camp Mystic, a Christian summer camp along the river.

A man surveys debris along the Guadalupe River after a flash flood struck the Kerrville, Texas, on Friday *PHOTO: PTI*

The flooding in the middle of the night on the Fourth of July holiday caught many by surprise.

Officials defended their preparations for severe weather but said they had not expected such an intense downpour that was the equivalent of months' worth of rain.

One National Weather Service forecast this week had called for only between three and six inches of rain, said Nim Kidd, Chief of the Texas Division of Emergency Management. "It did not predict the amount of rain that we saw," he said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

States to crack down on low grade helmet sellers

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Centre has asked states to take strict action on manufacturers and retailers selling sub-standard helmets to ensure the safety of two-wheeler riders. It also called for strict enforcement against manufacture or sale of helmets without BIS certification. A Quality Control Order has been in force since 2021, mandating ISI-marked helmets certified under BIS standards for all two-wheeler riders. To enforce quality standards, BIS conducts regular factory and market surveillance. In one Delhi operation, over 2,500 non-compliant helmets were seized from 9 manufacturers with expired or cancelled licences. Earlier, Department of Consumer Affairs wrote to District Collectors & District Magistrates to launch a nationwide campaign and to take stern action. *—PTI*

FMCG makers see weather impact on topline growth

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) makers are expecting their topline growth to be impacted in June quarter due to headwinds like unseasonal rains, a brief summer span and inflation pressure on key inputs. However, the industry witnessed a sequential recovery in demand during the quarter, with an uptick in volume growth, particularly in urban markets. Margins of FMCG majors remained below the normative level, and they expect a low-single-digit volume growth in the April-June period. Godrej expects its margin from India business to stay below the"normative range' while Dabur's revenue is expected to grow in low-single digits on account of a decline in beverages, due to unseasonal rains and a short summer. *—PTI*

Cement demand to rise 7-8% in FY26, says report

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

A recent report by Axis Securities predicts a robust 7-8 per cent growth in cement demand for the financial year 2026, buoyed by a flourishing real estate market supported by government housing programmes like the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY). The report highlights that large-scale construction projects under various government schemes are critical for driving sustained demand for cement, an essential material for housing infrastructure. Following a subdued performance in the first half of FY25, the cement sector is witnessing a recovery, with significant growth expected in Q1 FY26 due to increased govt capital expenditure and a revival in construction. *—ANI*

Soft drink industry to grow 10% next year: Report

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Systematix Institutional Equities report said, the Indian soft drink industry is poised for a resurgence, expecting over 10 per cent growth next year after facing challenges from adverse weather conditions this year. The carbonated soft drinks sector, valued at Rs 300 billion, historically sees growth between 13-14 per cent, and is anticipated to thrive with rising disposable incomes, urbanisation, and youthful consumer base. Soft drinks account for 40-45 per cent of overall beverage market. Despite the dominance of major brands, local players hold a significant market share, but competition from regional brands is easing post-GST. The demand for healthier, low-sugar options and regional flavours is expected to further fuel future growth and innovation, highlighting the evolving preferences. *—PTI*

'Quitting of retail giants like JS might impact trade'

Retail giants account for nearly 50% of options trading volumes

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Zerodha founder and CEO Nithin Kamath has cautioned that retail trading activity could be impacted if proprietary trading firms like Jane Street, which contribute nearly 50 per cent of options trading volumes, scale back their participation in the market.

This development could have negative implications for both exchanges and brokers, he added.

"Prop trading firms like Jane Street account for nearly 50 per cent of options trading volumes. If they pull back – which seems likely – retail activity could take a hit too. So this could be bad news for both exchanges and brokers," Kamath said on X.

"The next few days will be telling. F&O volumes might reveal just how reliant we are on these prop giants," he added.

Zerodha founder and CEO Nithin Kamath PHOTO: PTI

In an order released in the early hours of Friday, the market regulator found Jane Street (JS), a New York-based hedge fund, guilty of manipulating the indices by taking bets in the cash, and, futures and options markets simultaneously for making handsome gains.

It has barred the hedge fund from accessing the market and impounded over Rs 4,843 crore in gains. JS made a profit of Rs 36,671 crore on a net basis during the probe period from January 2023 - May 2025.

Kamath said that if the allegations against Jane Street are true, it's "blatant market manipulation" and despite warnings from the exchange, it continued.

"The shocking part? They kept at it even after receiving warnings from the exchanges. Maybe this is what happens when you're used to the lenient US regulatory regime. Think about the structure of US markets: dark pools, payment for order flow, and other loopholes that allow hedge funds to make billions off retail investors."

"None of these practices would be allowed in India, thanks to our regulators, You've got to hand it to Sebi for going after Jane Street," he added. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

GTRI cautions against impact of GM imports

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

The Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) has raised alarms over the potential impact of importing genetically modified (GM) agricultural products from the US as India negotiates an interim trade pact expected to be announced before 9 July.

The think tank warned that allowing imports of GM materials, such as soybean meal and distillers dried grains with solubles (DDGS) for animal feed, could severely affect India's agricultural exports to the European Union (EU), a significant market for Indian goods.

Despite the EU permitting GM feed, it maintains strict labelling rules and has strong consumer resistance to GM-linked products. Many European buyers prefer GM-free supply chains, and India's fragmented agricultural logistics and inadequate segregation facilities pose a risk of cross-contamination, potentially leading to rejections of shipments and heightened testing costs.

GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava emphasised that without robust traceability systems, the import of GM feed could undermine India's reputation for GMO-free products, particularly in sensitive sectors such as rice, tea, honey, spices, and organic goods.

He highlighted that while GM crops are biologically plant-based, containing some genes from animal sources may conflict with strict vegetarian principles held by certain communities. *—PTI*

Microsoft shuts down Pak operations after 25 years

PAKISTAN, 5 JULY

In a move that has unsettled Pakistan's fragile tech sector, Microsoft has announced the closure of its local office, ending a 25-year presence in the country.

As part of a global workforce reduction strategy, the tech giant will now support Pakistani clients remotely through regional hubs and authorised resellers, rather than maintaining a direct presence.

Microsoft confirmed the shift to TechCrunch, stating this reflects a model it already uses in several other countries.

Although the decision affects only five local employees—primarily focused on enterprise sales—the move has sent shockwaves through Pakistan's business and tech communities.

Unlike India, Microsoft never established a development centre in Pakistan, limiting its presence to sales and liaison functions.

- Pakistan's Ministry of Information & Broadcasting has linked closure to broader organisational restructuring, which saw over 9,000 job cuts worldwide.

Nevertheless, the exit is viewed as symbolically significant and indicative of waning global confidence.

Pakistan's Ministry of Information & Broadcasting has linked closure to broader organisational restructuring, which saw over 9,000 job cuts worldwide. However, Microsoft had already been shifting licensing and contract operations to Ireland in recent years.

Former Microsoft Pakistan head Jawwad Rehman urged the government to adopt KPI-driven strategies to retain international firms.

Former President Arif Alvi echoed concerns, revealing Microsoft had once considered expanding in Pakistan but opted for Vietnam due to its greater stability.

The timing has drawn criticism, coinciding with a government scheme to offer half a million global IT certifications, including Microsoft's.

While Google continues to invest locally, Microsoft's withdrawal highlights Pakistan's struggle to establish itself as a serious global tech contender.

It is a wake-up call for more coherent, investor-friendly policies. *—Agencies*

Gold prices likely to rise in late 2025, says report

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

A report from ICICI Bank Global Markets suggests that local gold prices in India may continue to rise in the latter half of 2025, potentially reaching the psychologically significant Rs 1,00,000 mark per 10g.

In June, domestic gold prices rose by 0.6 per cent, attributed to a slight depreciation of the Indian rupee.

The report predicts that local gold prices will move towards Rs 100,000 per 10g in the second half of 2025, following a trend of decreasing gold imports due to weaker demand amid high prices.

May saw gold imports valued at USD 2.5 billion, down from USD 3.1 billion the previous month, despite strong investment demand, highlighted by a net inflow of Rs 2.92 billion into exchange-traded funds.

Globally, while gold prices have remained flat recently, geopolitical developments have eased market tensions and tempered the demand for gold as an asset. *—ANI*

Inflation likely to match RBI's Q1 forecast: BoB

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Inflation is expected to align with the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) projections for the first quarter of Financial Year 2025–26, aided by a favourable statistical base and continued deflation in key essential commodities, according to a Bank of Baroda report.

The RBI forecasts consumer price index inflation for FY26 at 3.7 per cent, with Q1 at 2.9 per cent, Q2 at 3.4 per cent, Q3 at 3.9 per cent, and Q4 at 4.4 per cent. BoB Essential Commodities Index showed a year-on-year decline of 1.8 per cent in June 2025—its third consecutive month of deflation—largely driven by falling vegetable and pulse prices due to improved output and supply.

Retail prices of onions, potatoes, and tomatoes fell by 26.1 per cent, 20.3 per cent, and 24 per cent respectively. Among pulses, Tur/Arhar declined by 23.8 per cent, while cereals like rice fell 5.1 per cent.

Despite a nominal month-on-month rise of 0.6 per cent in June, the seasonally adjusted figure fell by 0.7 per cent, signalling seasonal effects. The report cautioned that July may see price reversals in vegetables. With inflation well within the RBI's comfort range, the central bank may prioritise growth in the near term. *—ANI*

Safex, Smartworks set to launch IPOs

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Safex Chemicals (India) and Smartworks Coworking Spaces are gearing up for initial public offerings (IPOs) to raise significant funds. Safex Chemicals has submitted preliminary papers to the capital markets regulator Sebi, looking to garner up to Rs 450 crore through a combination of a fresh issue of shares and an offer-for-sale.

The funds from Safex's fresh issue will primarily be allocated for debt repayment and corporate purposes. The company reported a revenue increase of 12.83 per cent to Rs 1,584.78 crore in fiscal 2025.

Meanwhile, Smartworks Coworking Spaces has announced its IPO will open for public subscription from 10 to 14 July, with anchor bidding starting on 9 July. The fresh issue size has been revised to Rs 445 crore, down from Rs 550 crore. Proceeds

- The funds from Safex's fresh issue will primarily be allocated for debt repayment and corporate purposes.

will fund capital expenditures for new centres, loan repayments, and general corporate needs.

Smartworks has expanded its operations significantly, achieving a compound annual growth rate of 20.80 per cent in space managed and 38.98 per cent growth in revenue between FY23 and FY25. *—PTI*

Ananth Tech set to launch India's first pvt satcom

HYDERABAD, 5 JULY

In a landmark move for India's space and telecom sectors, Hyderabad-based Ananth Technologies is set to become the country's first private firm to offer satellite communication (satcom) services using an indigenously built satellite.

The Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe) has granted approval for Ananth to begin broadband-from-space services by 2028.

The company will deploy a 4-tonne geostationary (GEO) satellite capable of delivering up to 100 Gbps of data across India. The initial investment for the project stands at Rs 3,000 crore, with potential for expansion based on demand.

Unlike global players, which use low Earth orbit satellites offering low latency, Ananth's GEO satellite will provide broader coverage from 35,786km above Earth.

The company will deploy a 4-tonne geostationary satellite capable of delivering up to 100 Gbps of data across India PHOTO: X

Meanwhile, Starlink is close to final clearance for operations in India, having received a draft letter of intent from IN-SPACe. Additionally, Vodafone Idea has partnered with US-based AST SpaceMobile to deliver satellite connectivity directly to standard smartphones, targeting underserved. *—Agencies*

IT sector to see mixed performance in Q1FY26: Report

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

The Indian Information and Technology (IT) sector will deliver a mixed performance in the first quarter of Financial Year 2026, with tier-1 companies likely to post muted revenue growth, while mid-tier firms are set to outperform, according to a report by HDFC Securities. The report further added that despite ongoing global economic uncertainty and subdued discretionary spending due to US tariff measures and broader macroeconomic challenges, deterioration in demand has been lower than initially anticipated. The report stated that a major cross-currency tailwind will aid the sector's reported revenue growth in USD terms for Q1 while some mid-tier firms are likely to face headwinds. *—ANI*

$50 BILLION MARKET VALUE

Reliance's new energy, AI to drive mkt

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Reliance Industries Ltd's investments in new energy and artificial intelligence (AI) infrastructure are set to drive a projected USD 50 billion increase in the firm's market value, according to Morgan Stanley analysts.

The oil-to-telecom-and-retail conglomerate, helmed by billionaire Mukesh Ambani, is gearing up for its next phase of value creation.

Currently valued at over USD 240 billion, Reliance's future growth hinges heavily on scaling its diversified verticals, particularly in new energy and AI.

Gen AI is the next frontier for Reliance as it retools the Jamnagar energy complex to monetise its energy production -- a key hurdle globally for Gen AI ramp.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

"We see potential for up to USD 60 billion in value creation from the new energy vertical as Reliance uses the electrons to power chemicals, data centres, and refineries," Morgan Stanley said in a report.

Reliance, it said, sees its New Energy business being "more ambitious, far more transformational, and far more global in scope than anything it's ever done before.

- Currently valued at over USD 240 billion, Reliance's future growth hinges heavily on scaling its diversified verticals, particularly in new energy and AI.

Reliance is building Gen AI infrastructure in Jamnagar that it plans to be ready in two years as well. It has also announced plans to power 1GW of data centre capacity that will use NVIDIA's Blackwell chips.

In the 3QF25 earnings call, Reliance provided more details on its strategy, with plans to position itself to benefit from AI adoption trends by establishing a comprehensive national AI infrastructure. *—PTI*

India-Pak trade persisted amid brief military conflict

ISLAMABAD, 5 JULY

Despite a brief military conflict and the continued closure of borders, trade between Pakistan and India persisted in May, primarily through a third country.

The official data showed that imports from India reached a three-year high during July-May FY25, Dawn quoted data of State Bank of Pakistan.

It showed that imports from India totalled USD 211.5 million in the first 11 months of FY25 — surpassing USD 207m in FY24 and USD 190m in FY23.

In May alone — when the four-day conflict broke out in the first week—imports stood at USD 15 million, slightly down from USD 17 million in the same month last year.

However, Pakistan's exports to India remained negligible.

In May, exports to India were recorded at just USD 1,000, while total exports during July-May FY25 were only USD 0.5 million.

In FY24 and FY23, exports stood at USD 3.44 million and USD 0.33 million, respectively, highlighting highly one-sided nature of bilateral trade.

Formal trade relations between Pakistan and India have suffered since 2019. However, after the 22 April, Pahalgam terror attack, India took a series of measures, including immediate shutting down of the Attari land-transit post, used for movement of certain kinds of goods. *—PTI*

Srikanth stuns top seed Chen to enter Canada Open SF

CALGARY, 5 JULY

India's Kidambi Srikanth continued his impressive run to enter the men's singles semifinals with a straight-game win over top seed Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei at the Canada Open Super 300 badminton tournament here.The former world championships silver medallist, who had reached the finals of the Malaysia Masters in May this year, outclassed world number six Chen 21-18 21-9 in a 43-minute quarterfinal clash on Friday night. Currently ranked 49th in the world, Srikanth will next face Japan's third seed Kenta Nishimoto for a place in the final.—*PTI*

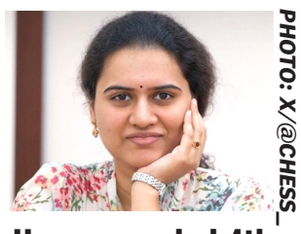


PHOTO: X/@CHESS_

Humpy seeded 4th in FIDE World Women's Chess Cup

BATUMI, 5 JULY

Indian Grandmaster Koneru Humpy has been seeded fourth and will start as one of the favourites in the FIDE World Women's Chess Cup, where the top three finishers will qualify for the Candidates' tournament.China's Lei Tingjie, Jiner Zhu, and Zhongyi Tan are the top three seeds. Along with Humpy they spearhead the Asian challenge in the section that has seen Asian dominance now for quite some time.The winner in the Candidates will earn the right to challenge reigning women's champion Wenjun Ju of China in the next championship.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X/@WOMEN'S EURO

Jule leads Germany to 2-0 opening win over Poland

LONDON, 5 JULY

Jule Brand scored one goal and set up the other to lead Germany to a 2-0 win over debutant Poland in their Women's European Championship opening game on Friday. Germany, the eight-time champion, needed patience against the hard-tackling and committed Poland players, but Brand made the most of a lapse in concentration when she cut inside two defenders to break the deadlock in the 52nd minute. The winger then sent in a cross for Lea Schüller to seal the result with a header in the 66th. Germany lost captain Giulia Gwinn to injury late in the first half after she made a desperate challenge to stop Ewa Pajor from scoring.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X/@KPMG

Diksha hangs in at Irish Open to make 11th cut in a row

KILDARE, 5 JULY

Diksha Dagar carded an even-par 73 in the second round to emerge as the lone Indian to cut the KPMG Women's Irish Open here. Dagar, who did not have a single par in her first six holes, was tied 56th after two rounds. It was Diksha's 11th cut in a row. The 24-year-old from Jhajjar, the highest-ranked Indian on the Ladies European Tour, has demonstrated great consistency with five Top-10 finishes, including a runner-up finish in Morocco. The other three Indians playing the Irish Open missed the cut as Avani Prashanth (74) fell short by one stroke and Tvesa Malik (78) and Hitaashee Bakshi (83) were way behind.—*PTI*

Vaibhav scripts history again: Hits fastest 100 in Youth ODIs

14-year-old batter hit 10 fours and 7 sixes during his fiery game

LONDON, 5 JULY

Vaibhav Suryavanshi smashed the record for the fastest hundred in Men's Youth ODIs during the fourth game of a five-match series between England U-19 and India U-19 in Worcester on Saturday.

Suryavanshi reached his century off 52 balls to break the previous record of 53 balls, held by Pakistan's Kamran Ghulam. The left-hander struck 10 fours and seven sixes during his fiery knock.

He was eventually dismissed for 143 off 78 balls, which included 13 fours and 10 sixes.

Last year, the 14-year-old had scored the second-fastest hundred in Men's Youth Tests against Australia U-19 in Chennai. He had reached the three-figure mark off just 56 balls to sit behind only Moeen Ali of England, who had smashed a 56-ball ton back in 2005. Suryavanshi is coming off a breakthrough Indian Premier League (IPL) campaign with Rajasthan Royals, during which he became the youngest player to score a century in the tournament's history, at the tender age of 14 years and 32 days. With his 35-ball century in that game against the Gujarat Titans in Jaipur, he also became the second-fastest player to reach the three-figure mark in IPL history. Suryavanshi has been in scorching form in the ongoing five-match Youth ODI series against England. In the previous game, he blitzed his way to a 20-ball half-century—the second-fastest in Youth ODIs by an Indian. He was eventually dismissed for 86 off 31 balls as India registered a comfortable four-wicket win to take a 2-1 series lead.

In the first two matches of the series, he had scores of 48 and 45. —*PTI*

'Fastest century ever' 14-year-old Vaibhav Suryavanshi continues to stun the cricketing world, smashing a 52-ball century against England U19 to break the Youth ODI record
PHOTO: PTI

England celebrate after winning against India *PHOTO: X/@ENGLAND*

England edge thriller to keep T20 series alive

LONDON, 5 JULY

India's batting faltered at the death as England held their nerves to pull off a narrow five-run win in a thrilling third women's T20 International here, keeping the series alive. It was an extraordinary day at the Kia Oval on Friday night, where England managed to triumph despite a spectacular batting collapse and sloppy fielding. Opting to bat, Sophia Dunkley (75) and Danni Wyatt-Hodge (66) smashed commanding fifties in a 137-run opening stand before England lost nine wickets for just 31 runs in 25 balls to post 171 for nine. In reply, India looked in complete control with Smriti Mandhana (56) and Shafali Verma (47) adding 85 runs for the opening wicket, aided by several reprieves from England's butterfingered fielders.

However, Lauren Filer (2/30) bowled a fiery spell to dismiss Mandhana in the 16th over and trigger India's slide. Sophie Ecclestone (1/24), Lauren Bell (1/37), and Issy Wong (1/36) chipped in with a wicket each to restrict India to 166 for five in their 20 overs.

England Women's captain **Nat Sciver-Brunt** was on Saturday ruled out of the remaining two games of the five-match T20I series against India Women's due to an injury to her left groin. India will face England in the fourth match in Manchester on Wednesday.

England 171 for 9 (Dunkley 75, Wyatt-Hodge 66, Deepti 3-27, Arundhati 3-32) beat India 166 for 5 (Mandhana 56, Shafali 47, Filer 2-30) by five runs. —*PTI*

FINAL GOODBYE

Players stand during a minute of silence for two soccer players who were killed in a car crash, Diogo Jota and his brother Andre Silva, before the Club World Cup quarterfinal soccer match between Fluminense and Al Hilal in Orlando
PHOTO: X/@ALHILAL_EN

Gill slams a 100 after breaking Kohli's record

BIRMINGHAM, 5 JULY

Indian skipper Shubman Gill has been on a record-breaking spree in this England tour.

Perhaps, it seems like the leadership responsibility has brought the best out of him. And thus, his bat is breathing fire in the ongoing Anderson-Tendulkar series.

After scoring a hundred in leads, Gill followed it with a historic double hundred in Birmingham to set the record for the highest individual score on English soil. Gill amassed 269 runs in India's first innings at Edgbaston.

In the second essay, he notched up a half-century and was marching towards his 8th Test hundred.

In due course, he surpassed Virat Kohli to register the most runs by an Indian captain in a single Test match. —*PTI*

Leclerc leads in final Silverstone practice

DUBAI, 5 JULY

Ferrari driver Charles Leclerc topped the timesheets during Saturday's final practice session for the British Grand Prix, leading the way from McLaren rival Oscar Piastri and Red Bull's Max Verstappen as rookies Gabriel Bortoleto and Ollie Bearman endured late crashes.

After a bright and warm first day at Silverstone, topped by home favourite Lando Norris, cloudy, cooler conditions greeted the drivers for FP3, which gave them one more chance to tweak their cars ahead of the mid-afternoon Qualifying hour. When the session got underway at a slightly delayed time of 1135, drivers gradually trickled out on track to begin their programmes and assess the conditions. —*PTI*

Dhoni made 50th birthday of a truck driver special

BIRMINGHAM, 5 JULY

Andrew Sykes, a truck driver from the industrial town of Stoke-on-Trent in Central England, has always loved his cricket. And cricket loved him back in the most beautiful manner that he could have ever envisaged. Back in 2014, during India's tour of England, erstwhile Indian skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni presented him with an Indian ODI team jersey after finding out it was his 50th birthday. He carried his prized possession, presented by the great 'MSD', to Edgbaston on Saturday.

And it was at this very Edgbaston ground where he was volunteering during an ODI game when Dhoni made his 'Red Letter Day' even more special. Sykes has also been volunteering at cricket games, primarily in the Midlands region, since 2009, and is now 62, but the memories of his milestone birthday in 2014 have not faded even as he has grown older by more than a decade.

It was during an ODI at this venue that Dhoni handed him the jersey of his then-teammate Bhuvneshwar Kumar as a special gesture for his service to the game as a volunteer. —*PTI*

Andrew Sykes, who works as a volunteer at Edgbaston Cricket Ground
PHOTO: PTI

India's white-ball tour of Bangladesh rescheduled

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Saturday mutually agreed to defer the white-ball series between Bangladesh and India, which was scheduled to be held from August 2025 to September 2026.

The away series was to feature three ODIs and three Twenty20 Internationals to be played from 17 to 31

August in Chittagong and Dhaka. "This decision has been reached following discussions between the two Boards, taking into account the international cricketing commitments and scheduling convenience of both teams," the BCCI said in a release.

The BCB said the fresh schedule of the series will be announced in "due course."

"The BCB looks forward to welcoming India in September 2026 for this eagerly anticipated series. —*PTI*

Hosting and competing, Neeraj wins inaugural NC Classic title

BENGALURU, 5 JULY

Neeraj Chopra achieved yet another feat in his illustrious career on Saturday by becoming the first Indian to compete in an international event as its host, owning the stage in an electrifying atmosphere at the Kanteerava Stadium here.

The 27-year-old from Khandra village in Haryana's Panipat, who has won every accolade his sport has to offer, was the cynosure of all eyes as he fulfilled his lifetime dream.

It is his way of giving back to the sport and to the fans the experience of watching him and other top international stars compete in front of their own eyes.

Chopra emulated Duplantis in having a single-event World Athletics-recognised competition in the name of an athlete.

The world's best pole vaulters compete at Mondo Classic every year in Uppsala, Sweden. Kip Keino Classic in Nairobi is a multi-event competition. Under overcast, cool, and windy conditions, and a temperature measuring around 24 degrees Celsius, the Kanteerava Stadium was not full, but it was enough to make a deafening noise to support Chopra.

Watched by family members and friends, Chopra was cheered by the adoring fans in all his throws in the 12-man competition.

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah also watched the competition from the VVIP area. —*PTI*

Indian athlete Neeraj Chopra celebrates after his throw at Neeraj Chopra Classic 2025 at Kanteerava Stadium in Bengaluru on Saturday
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

CLUB WORLD CUP

Fluminense beat Al Hilal 2-1 to reach semis

LONDON, 22 JAN

Substitute Hercules struck a 70th-minute winner as Brazil's Fluminense defeated Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal 2-1 on Friday to reach the semi-finals of the Club World Cup. A fine left-foot finish from Matheus had put the Rio club ahead in the 40th minute but Al Hilal's Brazilian forward Marcos Leonardo levelled six minutes into the second half before Hercules stole the show to the delight of the vast majority of the 43,091 crowd. Fluminense could yet face an all-Brazilian semi-final if their rivals from Sao Paulo, Palmeiras, can overcome Premier League outfit Chelsea in Friday's other quarter-final. Al Hilal had pulled off the biggest upset of the tournament, beating Manchester City 4-3, to reach the last eight and Simone Inzaghi's side fought hard until the end to keep their adventure alive.They bow out of the tournament having been unbeaten through the group stage, including holding Real Madrid to a draw and having truly made their mark on the world stage.

There was a moment's silence before the kick-off in memory of Liverpool and Portugal forward Diogo Jota and his younger brother Andre Silva, who died in the early hours of Thursday after their car veered off a motorway in Spain and burst into flames. Al Hilal's line-up featured two of Jota's Portugal team-mates, Ruben Neves and João Cancelo. The first half was a tight and tactical affair with few chances until Martinelli opened the scoring when he picked the ball up from Gabriel inside the box and spanned out to give himself space for a left-foot shot that rocketed past Yassine Bounou. Al Hilal went close to a quick response when Kalidou Koulibaly's header forced Fluminense's 44-year-old goalkeeper Fabio into a fine save. —*PTI*

Hercules

Sinner demolishes Martinez to reach Wimbledon last-16

LONDON, 5 JULY

Imperious Wimbledon top seed Jannik Sinner made short work of Spain's Pedro Martinez on Saturday, reaching the last 16 without dropping a set.

The Italian three-time Grand Slam champion eased past his 52nd-ranked opponent 6-1, 6-3, 6-1. Sinner, 23, took a vice-like grip on the Centre Court match from the start, racing into a 5-0 lead. Martinez was given a time-out at that point and received treatment on his shoulder before winning the next game to love on his serve, but Sinner wrapped up the set in the following game.

The second set was tighter until Sinner broke in the fifth game, repeating the feat to take the set. Martinez required further treatment before the third set, but it had little impact as Sinner raced into a 5-0 lead. The Spaniard, 28, held up a finger after clawing a game back, but that only delayed the inevitable. Sinner will face either the 19th seed Grigor Dimitrov or Sebastian Ofner in the fourth round at the All England Club. —*PTI*